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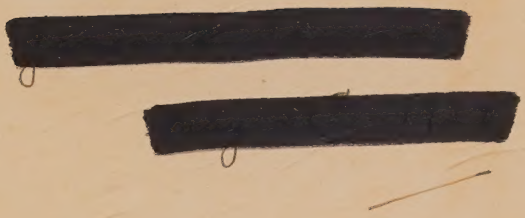

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# THE PAULINE EPISTLES

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# THE
# PAULINE EPISTLES

## *INTRODUCTORY AND EXPOSITORY STUDIES*

BY

R. D. SHAW, D.D.

EDINBURGH

*FOURTH EDITION*

EDINBURGH
T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET

Αἱ μὲν ἐπιστολαί, φησίν, βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί.

Audi ergo Paulum Apostolum, Mihi autem absit gloriari, nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi.

Excæcatio Pauli, illuminatio mundi.

L'on comprend que Christ ait eu besoin d'un tel instrument pour opérer la plus grande des œuvres après la sienne, et que, ne pouvant l'obtenir de bon gré, il se soit emparé de lui de vive force.

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## NOTE TO THE THIRD AND FOURTH EDITIONS.

THERE are no material changes in these issues, beyond the addition of a few references in the notes.

R. D. S.

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IN re-issuing *The Pauline Epistles*, I cannot but express my deep gratification that, notwithstanding the large and ever-increasing literature on the subject, a demand for a second edition should be made so soon. It encourages me to believe that, however faulty the work may be in many respects, it is likely to prove of some practical service as an introduction to Pauline study. I may also take the opportunity of cordially thanking many critics of my book, both in this country and in America, for the spirit of fairness, and even of generosity, which has animated their reception of it in the press.

Beyond a few slight corrections, there is no change in this edition.

R. D. S.

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# PREFACE.

Two of the leading literary critics of the past generation expressed very different views of St. Paul. Renan thought that his day was over, and his influence spent at the Reformation. Matthew Arnold declared that his day had not yet come, that the true Paul sleeps, but that one day there will be a resurrection, when his meaning will be apprehended, and happier generations will consent and applaud. Both critics, I venture to think, were wrong: Renan palpably so, as a matter of history; Arnold scarcely less so, as a matter of interpretation. One thing is certain, apart from the Gospels, there are no portions of Scripture more clearly recognised to-day as of vital importance to Christian Theology than the Pauline writings, none more engrossingly occupying the study of Christian scholars, none more influential and authoritative in the faith and life of the Christian people.

The purpose of the present book, as the sub-title indicates, is twofold—critical and historical. It endeavours to discuss the leading questions of literary criticism raised in connection with the Epistles, and at the same time to exhibit the historical setting of each Epistle and its characteristic message.

It can no longer be said that there are any of the Pauline Epistles free from the attacks and suspicions of criticism. Time was when those to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans, stood clear and undoubted. The Tübingen school, in all its various modifications, always accepted them and worked from them. Within recent years, however, the question has been vigorously

raised whether the same principles which led to doubt in the case of the other Epistles, should not also have a similar issue in the case of the favoured four. This is the contention of the Dutch school. Professor Van Manen, its most distinguished exponent, has recently set forth his leading ideas in the pages of the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, and in the following Studies an attempt is made to review his position. The Captivity Epistles are of course an old battlefield, and the main questions of criticism have to be faced in taking up especially the Epistle to the Ephesians. The Pastoral Epistles, in the opinion of many recent writers, are also losing ground, and perhaps no better introduction to the study of modern methods of criticism could be found, than to fix attention on what has of late years been published with regard to these Epistles. It seems to be increasingly believed either that they are entirely pseudonymous, or that, if there be any parts of them genuine, these are so riddled and shattered by interpolation and other literary handling as to be almost beyond recognition. Weizsäcker passes them over; Sabatier reluctantly drops them; Beyschlag, McGiffert, and Moffatt do the same. To prove them Paul's to demonstration may not be possible. But that negative criticism, in taking up the burden of proof, has come to a triumphant conclusion, is, I believe, far from being the true state of the case.

The predominant aim of the Studies, however, is to deal with the Epistles in the historical spirit: that is, to set them as vividly as possible in their original environment, to show their relation to the life of the man who wrote them, and also to the needs and circumstances of the readers to whom they were addressed. This, if it can be accomplished with any measure of success, is undoubtedly one of the most helpful services that can in these days be rendered to students of the Books of Scripture.

The field of Pauline study is so large that it might well absorb the leisure of a lifetime. The writings themselves are many-sided and profound, the literature that has gathered round them is voluminous, and the questions raised are often those that penetrate to the very essence of

the faith. It is impossible within reasonable limits to deal with every issue, or to meet every new opinion, weighty or otherwise, but an attempt has been made to render the survey as complete as possible; and a sufficient end will perhaps be gained if these pages are felt to afford some guidance in the fascinating and often difficult study of these important Letters, and to aid in the elucidation of their teaching.

In discussing the Organisation of the early Church (Ephesians and Pastorals), I regret that I was unable to make use of Principal Lindsay's valuable work on *The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries*, especially as it adds all the weight of his scholarship to the view regarding the origin of the episcopate which was commonly held previous to Hatch and Harnack, and which I have endeavoured to support. His book appeared when my manuscript was already in the printer's hands.

To my friends, the Rev. Professor Orr, D.D., Glasgow, and the Rev. D. W. Forrest, D.D., Skelmorlie, I desire to express my sincere gratitude for their great kindness in reading the proofs, and for many valuable suggestions while the book was passing through the press.

R. D. S

Edinburgh, *February*, 1903.

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[3] *Einleitung*, ii. 640–642.
[4] *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*, pp. 395–396.
[5] *Die Chronologie der paulinischen Briefe*, pp. 285–286.
[6] *Biblical Essays*, pp. 221 sqq.
[7] *Apostolic Age*, p. 680.
[8] *Historical New Testament*, pp. 123 sqq., with many valuable tables and references.

# INTRODUCTION.

Tracts for the times, they are tracts for all times. Children of the fleeting moment, they contain truths of infinite moment. They compress more ideas in fewer words than any other writings, human or divine, excepting the Gospels. They discuss the highest themes which can challenge an immortal mind. . . . And all this before humble little societies of poor, uncultured artisans, freedmen and slaves! And yet they are of more real and general value to the church than all the systems of theology from Origen to Schleiermacher—yea, than all the confessions of faith. For eighteen hundred years they have nourished the faith of Christendom, and will continue to do so till the end of time. This is the best evidence of their divine inspiration.—**Schaff.**

# THE PAULINE EPISTLES.

## INTRODUCTION.

No fewer than twenty-one of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament are in the form of letters. Among these the writings attributed to St. Paul will always occupy a foremost place, both on account of their intrinsic value, and because of the extraordinary influence they have exerted on the history of the Christian religion. The Epistles that bear his name are fourteen in number; and, with one exception, they may all fairly, though with very various degrees of certainty, be accepted as his. The exception is the Epistle to the Hebrews, whose authorship it seems impossible to determine.

The New Testament arrangement of the thirteen Pauline Epistles[1] is unfortunate, for it appears to be destitute of any real significance. It evidently proceeded on the artificial principle that guided the arrangement of the prophecies of the Old Testament, that the longest should come first. Perhaps some consideration was also given to the presumed importance of the parties to whom

[1] The distinction so interestingly elaborated by Deissmann in his *Bible Studies* between true letters (*i.e.* intimate personal communications in a written in lieu of a spoken form) and literary letters or epistles (*i.e.* compositions intended for publication, and framed in the letter style simply as a convenient literary *eidos*), is no doubt real, and of considerable importance for purposes of criticism. All the Paulines are "letters" in the strictly technical sense (though Deissmann would except the Pastorals). Yet in common usage with regard to the apostolic writings the words "letters" and "epistles" are practically interchangeable, and there need be no misunderstanding in continuing to speak of the Pauline Epistles.

the letters were addressed. But clearly the best order in which to study them is the historical. We can never understand them unless we pay respect to the circumstances out of which they sprang.

Happily the Epistles may be naturally arranged into four well-defined chronological groups, regarding which scholars are in pretty general harmony.

1. It is impossible to fix the date of the Apostle's birth, though we cannot be wrong in regarding him as a slightly younger contemporary of the Lord Jesus. It is certain that his conversion on the way to Damascus took place within but a few years of the Crucifixion,[1] say in 34 A.D., when he would be about thirty years of age. A few years more and he was launched on his great career, which lasted for fully other thirty years. It is not at first, however, that we have any writings bearing his name. If any ever existed dating from an early period of his ministry, they have not been preserved to the Church.[2] No less than fifteen years, about half of the whole period of his evangelical activity, pass away. The early labours in Antioch are over, and the First Missionary Journey is over. It is not till the close of the Second Journey, which led him through Asia Minor and Macedonia to Greece, that we have the first two of the preserved Epistles, and, indeed, most probably the earliest writings of the New Testament, the Epistles to the Thessalonians. These form the first group, and are to be dated about the year 50 or 51 A.D.

2. After an interval of a few years, we have the second group, consisting of the four "great" Epistles—those to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans. They belong to the Third Missionary Journey, and range between the years 52–56 A.D.

3. Once more we have a period of about four or five

[1] Hausrath and Harnack allow one year's interval, Keim and Volkmar less than two years, Ramsay three, Lightfoot four, Renan four or five, Zahn five, and Turner between six and seven.

[2] On the probability of lost epistles, cf. Jowett, *Thessalonians*, etc., i. 104 (ed. 1894); Weiss, *N. T. Introduction*, i. § 16, 2; Lightfoot, *Philippians*, pp. 138 sqq.

years' literary silence, bringing us to the period of the Roman captivity, 59–61 A.D. During the comparative liberty of his confinement in his own hired lodging, the Apostle wrote other four of the Epistles now in our possession, the third group, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians.

4. We have considerable reason for believing that at the close of two years Paul was set free from captivity in Rome. We infer that he returned with renewed energy to his cherished labours. He is probably to be followed eastward to Macedonia, Asia Minor, and Crete, then westward to Spain and possibly to Gaul, and finally back again to the Churches and missions of the East. A period of three or four years would be occupied in these journeys. Then we have the fourth and last group of his writings, in 64–65 A.D., the three Pastoral Epistles: the First to Timothy, written probably from Macedonia; the Epistle to Titus, most likely from Corinth; and the Second to Timothy, from the malefactor's cell in Rome, on the eve of hurrying martyrdom, when the dusty Ostian Way became his Via Dolorosa, and the little hollow among the blue Italian hills the scene of his exodus "to be with Christ."

During this period of fifteen years it is obvious there is room for development, and it is quite natural to endeavour to trace the progress and expansion of the Apostle's thought through his Epistles. It is important, however, to bear in mind the late stage in Paul's history at which his writings appear. His letters are but a fragment, and not a complete record of his Christian experience. Much had taken place before they were written. The three quiet, critical, formative 'years' in Arabia, which doubtless saw the deep-laid foundations of his convictions regarding the Redeemer, were long past. Friendly visits to the leaders of the Church at Jerusalem had taken place; controversies, too, had been keenly engaged in. Peter had been withstood and persuaded at Antioch, and the Council of Jerusalem had favourably uttered its voice on the crucial question of the relations between Jewish and Gentile Christians. Paul, moreover, had been busily employed in

the clarifying process of preaching and expounding his views for many years and in many lands — in Syria, in Cyprus, in Asia Minor, and in Macedonia. So that now, in his forty-fifth year, we may believe he had well beaten out his music, had reached clear conceptions of Divine truth, and understood as perfectly the great saving doctrines which it was his delight to preach, as ever he did in the remaining years of his life.

In point of fact, while it would be absurd to preclude all possibility of change in Paul's religious opinions, the development which manifests itself in the sequence of his Epistles is rather in the mode of presenting the gospel than in its essential conceptions. It is what has been properly called an historical development. Even when we perceive what we call advance, we need not mistake for a new building what is only the rising heavenward of the old. Natural growth and radical change are two very different things. It is only what we should expect if we come to trace the lines of the former in the writings of the Apostle. "A mind like his," says Hort, "in constant living contact with truth, needing and receiving fresh enlightenment from day to day, for dealing with new and changing needs of the Churches, must assuredly have known growth. New experience must have brought new light, giving comparatively clear vision of truths hitherto imperfectly grasped or even overlooked altogether, and often changing the relative importance of truths already familiar. And, supposing such a growth to have arisen, it would be strange if it left no traces in the extant Epistles of different dates. The supposition does no injury to their authority as books of Scripture; it only helps to wean us from the delusively and unreally simple habit of using them as detached oracles, and helps us to understand better the manifoldness of truth through their manifold adaptation in respect of time and place and circumstance."[1]

The absence in earlier Epistles, therefore, of thoughts which are prominent later, must not lead us to suppose

[1] *Prolegomena to Romans and Ephesians*, pp. 123–124.

that such thoughts could not have been present to Paul's mind at the earlier stage, but simply that the circumstances of the earlier Epistles did not call them forth. In other circumstances he had not only to express his characteristic conceptions of Christian truth, but to defend them, setting them forth in forms crystallised by long spiritual experience, or determined by the nature of the opposition they were likely to meet. Thus the formulation of doctrine to check the advances of Judaic antagonists was not needed in writing immediately to the young converts in Thessalonica, but was demanded a few years later, with all the force and dialectic skill the Apostle could command, when he was called on to address the Churches of Galatia, Corinth, and Rome. Similarly, later still, the incipient heresies of a theosophic and Oriental type, which crept into the Churches of the Lycus valley, mystifying and deluding the faithful, and derogating from the supremacy of Christ, led to a new cast of thought, a new revolving of the flashing lights of faith, fresh utterances for fresh needs; and such we find in the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians. Last of all, when the end was drawing nigh, when others who should take up the great work had to be thought of and selected, when the Churches were developing an organised life, and required guidance for the days to come, we have the last three Epistles, with their earnest counsels, their wise directions both for pastors and people, addressed to the trusted friends and associates who were to be left behind.

Like all true letters, those of St. Paul were occasional in their origin. He did not compose them as studies in theology, or as treatises on Christian doctrine which he desired to give to the world; even the Epistle to the Romans is only an apparent, not a real, exception.[1] Events of moment to him and his converts called them into

[1] The modern "radical" school, however, — conveniently called the Dutch, from the nationality of its leading exponents,—takes a diametrically opposite view with regard to Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians, namely, that they are "epistles" in the strict sense, books or treatises, intended as standards for doctrine and morals. See later, on *The Dutch School and the Four Great Epistles*, pp. 71 and 72–74.

being. He was appealed to on some point of faith or conduct, and he replied. Or, he heard good news, or received tokens of affection, and he wrote to express his joy, to encourage, and to exhort. Again, he heard of the presence of teachers who calumniated him, denied his authority, and undermined the faith of his followers. This drew forth his bold definitions of doctrine, his impassioned defences of the gospel, and his no less impassioned apologies for his own life.

These things naturally affected the style in which the Epistles were composed. There never was a writer whose style more clearly reflected the mood and purpose of the hour. It completely reveals the man, and its rapid changes are just the lights and shadows flitting over his face. It indicates the pulses of his feeling, shows him quivering with nervous excitement and anxiety, or flashing with indignation, jubilant with Christian triumph, or calm with the hidden depths of Christian peace. It is not polished or careful as to form, rather the reverse; it not seldom labours under the burden of the thought, becomes involved, digresses, goes off at a word, draws clause out of clause in telescopic fashion, as one new idea suggests another, until the main purpose is almost forgotten, and there is either a violent turn to recover it, or an abrupt conclusion and a new start altogether. Sometimes the Apostle seems verily to wrestle with words, struggling to express some great idea that almost passes knowledge. In this respect he has been compared with two very different men—Thucydides and Cromwell: "In all three there is a disproportion between thought and language, the thought straining the language till it cracks in the process—a shipwreck of grammar and logic, as the sentences are whirled through the author's mind—a growth of words and thoughts out of and into each other, often to the utter entanglement of the argument which is framed out of them."[1] Paul was also fond of expressing the most spiritual conceptions in poetic and concrete symbols; delighted, like a true Hebrew, in elaborate

[1] Stanley on *Corinthians*, p. viii.

parallelisms and antitheses; loved to startle his readers with a paradox, or to confound his opponents with a dilemma. A born debater, he frequently uses the quick thrust of short, sharp sentences, the rapid fire of triumphant interrogation; spiritually-minded, he rejoices to wind up a paragraph with an outburst of praise or prayer; and a child of feeling, he sometimes suffers the depression of the moment to display itself in passages that are sombre and heavy, without lilt or gleam. Such characteristics vary in the different Epistles. Sometimes he wrote in peace and gladness, at other times under the keenest tension, when his thoughts were fire and his words were battles. Much depended on the conditions to which he addressed himself. He was affected by these in the highest degree, and no style was ever less trammelled and stereotyped. Hence, in studying the Epistles, it is necessary to be guarded against basing too much on mere arguments from style. We have to do with a genius so sensitive and versatile, that nice balancing of probabilities of authorship, and narrowing and fixing of dates, must never be made to depend too exclusively on our conceptions of what might or might not have been its product.[1]

[1] The following passage on Paul's style, from the pen of Dean Alford (*Edinburgh Review*, Jan.–April 1853, p. 112), may be quoted:—"There [in Corinth] commenced that invaluable series of letters in which, while every matter relating to the faith is determined once for all with demonstration of the spirit and power, and every circumstance requiring counsel at the time, so handled as to furnish precepts for all time, the whole heart of this wonderful man is poured out and laid open. Sometimes he pleads, and reminds, and conjures, in the most earnest strain of fatherly love: sometimes playfully rallies his converts on their vanities and infirmities: sometimes, with deep and bitter irony, concedes that he may refute, and praises where he means to blame. The course of the mountain torrent is not more majestic nor varied. We have the deep still pool, the often returning eddies, the intervals of calm and steady advance, the plunging and foaming rapids, and the thunder of the headlong cataract. By turns fervid and calm, argumentative and impassioned, he wields familiarly and irresistibly the varied weapons of which Providence has taught him the use. With the Jew he reasons by Scripture citation, with the Gentile by natural analogies: with both, by the testimony of conscience to the justice and holiness of God. Were not the Epistles of Paul among the most eminent of inspired writings, they would long ago have been ranked as the most wonderful of uninspired."

It is unlikely that the Apostle wrote any of the Epistles we possess entirely with his own hand. He made his mark or sign in them; as he says in doing so, "In every Epistle so I write"; but he seems usually to have dictated his message to a friend or amanuensis. This also left traces on the style. We feel we are all the time listening to a *speaker*—one whom we may imagine walking up and down his room, while the pen of the shorthand writer flies swiftly over the parchment to keep pace with the utterance. All the Epistles have this air of being spoken, reported, and passed on without much revisal. Hence the broken sentences, the occasional obscurity, the natural digressions, as well as the freedom and buoyancy, by which they are so much distinguished.

We could scarcely have imagined a literary form less likely to be chosen to convey a great religious revelation to the world.[1] Yet its advantages are obvious. How living it makes the page! How vivid, natural, and full of human interest! Such records do not seem hand-written, but heart-written: as Luther said, "They are not dead words; they are living creatures, and have hands and feet." Here, we perceive, is a man who has lived the great life and understands it; who believes and therefore speaks; who thinks, and says what he thinks; who is filled with the Spirit, and speaks as he is moved by the Holy Ghost.

1. Thus the first general characteristic of the Epistles is that they are extremely personal, and afford a very complete revelation of their author. He was a man of God in the truest sense, perhaps the most gifted, the most loyal, the most heroic, that the Divine Spirit ever sent forth to labour for Christ in the world.

St. Paul was a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, a city famous for its university life and Grecian culture. According to Strabo, its university excelled all the schools of the time, not excepting even those of Athens and Alexandria. In its classes it is possible Paul first became acquainted with the poets whom he quotes in his writings.

[1] But cf. Deissmann, quoting Dieterich, *Bible Studies*, p. 33.

It is generally believed that he belonged to a family of good position, and, with bright hopes and prospects, he doubtless received as excellent a training as the times could give. Religiously he was brought up in the popular sect of the Pharisees, and completed his education in Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel, one of the most liberal-minded men of his race. Moreover, Paul was a Roman citizen. Of this he made proud boast, and called his citizenship to his service more than once in the perils of after years. It also had its influence on him intellectually, and widened the horizon of his thoughts. The magnificent organisation of the Empire, the majesty of its law, and its all-embracing power, made their silent impression upon his mind, and guided him to characteristic ideas of a universal spiritual sway still mightier and nobler.[1]

On him, so trained and gifted, the Spirit of Christ fell with overwhelming power. We are familiar with the story of his conversion on the way to Damascus. It was a turning-point not for him alone, but verily in the spiritual history of mankind. Thenceforth Paul became Christ-possessed, and "knew nothing" but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. All his gifts, his zeal, his perfervid genius, his invincible persistence, were consecrated to one great end—to declare the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. This focussed and directed all his energies. The Epistles show us how a life of such splendid devotion was spent. In season and out of season he proclaimed his message; through perils and persecutions, weakness and disaster almost more than flesh could bear, disowned by his kindred and hated by many whom

[1] "Law and justice," says Harnack, "radiated from Rome to the provinces, and in their light nationalities faded away, and a cosmopolitanism was developed which pointed beyond itself, because the moral spirit can never find its satisfaction in that which is realised. . . . The Church by her preaching would never have gained whole circles, but only individuals, had not the universal State already produced a neutralising of nationalities and brought men nearer each other in temper and disposition" (*History of Dogma*, i. 122). Cf. also Merivale's Boyle Lectures (1864) on *The Conversion of the Roman Empire*: Lecture on the Expansion of Heathen Belief by the Ideas of Roman Jurisprudence.

he meant to serve, he pushed on through the dreary deserts of paganism, establishing his missions, dotting them here and there like stars over the vast Empire—most humble beginnings, yet destined to become centres of light to the whole modern world. Through every page we hear him rejoicing, uttering the accent of hope, and cheering himself with undying confidence in Christ; ever lifting himself and his readers out of petty, finite troubles into the clear air of the eternal—"never ceasing in his upward flight until he, and all the poor subjects of contention with him, seem lost, like grains of sand, beneath the bending sky."[1]

2. The Epistles are also a record of the life and development of the early Church, and mirror for us many aspects of the conflict which the Church in every age must endure. They bring before us the doubts, the fears, the failures, the errors, the joys, the hopes, the aspirations, the achievements, the heroic endurance of the converts, their ideals of saintliness, the questions that troubled their awakened conscience, the environment and tendencies that were antagonistic to the faith, the efforts made to conserve the common life, and to organise and extend the influence of the Church. And while it is true that in special form many of the things recorded have long since passed away, yet in nature and essence they never pass. In the deepest experiences the human soul is always the same, and whatever has once reached it in its depths, and has touched and quickened it there, whispering to it words of mercy and hope, and raising it to nobler and purer levels, must manifestly possess a virtue which the world can never afford to despise.

3. Further, the Pauline Epistles are a noble testimony to the Lord Jesus. They presuppose the Life of the Gospels, and illustrate the marvellous power that had begun to flow from it.

It is urged, indeed, that this testimony merely gives us the Christ of Paul's conception, a subjective interpretation rather than a record. Apart from simple statements and

[1] R. H. Hutton, *Theol. Essays:* review of Renan's *St. Paul.*

references to facts, this is no doubt true. Paul not only sets forth Christ, but in a large degree is occupied in exhibiting the spiritual significance of Christ. It cannot be said that this is a matter for regret. Rather, had it not occurred, we should have devoutly wished it had. The interpretation of Jesus was of the first moment, and was inevitable as soon as men began to make Him the burden of their message. Not Paul alone, but all the Apostles, when they preached the gospel, set forth their conception of Christ. They could not do otherwise; and the remarkable thing is that they all did it in the same way. They are in perfect harmony in all the essential lines of their message.[1] Not only so, but Christ Himself put a spiritual interpretation on His Life and Sufferings, and the apostolic representation is in deepest harmony also with that. We only escape this by denying some of the most characteristic utterances attributed to Jesus—an arbitrary and suspicious practice to which there seems no limit. Further, it was expressly for the full understanding of the Gospel Life, in all its Divine and human relations, that Christ promised the Holy Spirit. To turn away from the unfolding is much the same as to deny the dispensation of that Spirit. We have to guard, therefore, against dismissing the witness simply on the ground that it presents an apostolic "conception." There is a desire to get back, it is said, simply to the workshop of Nazareth and to the Sermon on the Mount, to give ear only to the gentle idyls and parables of the Galilean and Judean hills. It is curiously implied that no dogmas existed there. As if from the lips of Christ we had no hints of a saving faith, a vicarious sacrifice, a regenerating Spirit; no Divine claims, no acceptance of Messianic prophecy, no new attitude to the Law, no hard sayings of mystic union with Himself, no dark

[1] Paret, for example, in his *Paulus und Jesus*, pp. 60, 61, declares "that any essential distinction between the preaching of Paul and the primitive Apostles as to the teaching, life, sufferings, and resurrection of Jesus is inconceivable in itself, and no trace of it can be found either in the New Testament or the literature of the sub-apostolic age." Cit. Knowling, *Witness of the Epistles*, p. 158 n.

outlines of the Last Things! To escape doctrine by the process of "returning" to Jesus is one of the most surprising delusions of modern times.

In considering Paul's testimony, it is, in the first place, a great mistake to ignore that he himself does take us literally "back to Christ." The historic Christ, the Christ as we know Him on the page of the Gospels, appears or is implied on almost every page of the Epistles. "It has been forgotten," says Pfleiderer, "that the work of Paul presupposes as its indispensable basis the personal history of Jesus, without which basis it would be as a castle in the clouds."[1] Many of the apostolic dogmas could never have been formulated apart from the antecedent historical data. Indications of such historical knowledge are so frequent as to give reality to the saying that "the Epistles are also Gospels," or to Thenius' phrase, "the Gospel without the Gospels"; and even if, as is manifest, the Epistles do not give us the same wealth of details, they are for the history of Jesus, as Hase acknowledges, still more valuable than the Gospels themselves as "authentic vouchers." Similarly, it is the opinion of Wendt, that the Pauline Epistles may actually be taken as the primary basis for estimating the historical trustworthiness of the Gospels, and that we are justified in arguing back from them alone "to the actual contents of the conceptions and teaching of Jesus which they presuppose."[2] Paul possibly never saw Jesus in the flesh, but it is evident that he knew His story well. It is not only that it must have been so from his early intimacy with the Pharisaic circle and from his attitude as a persecutor, and later from his intercourse with the friends and relatives of Jesus, but that the Epistles themselves reveal the fact in many direct statements, and above all in still more numerous indirect allusions and general references, implying a common historical knowledge between his readers and himself, without

[1] *The Influence of Paul on the Development of Christianity*, Hibbert Lecture, p. 10.

[2] Cf. Knowling, *Witness of the Epistles*, p. 101; Wendt, *Teaching of Jesus*, i. 29.

which such allusions would have been mere enigmas destitute of significance. Even in the Epistles, therefore, there is much to be gathered of the life and passion, the birth and death and triumph, the mind, the teaching, the commandments, the meekness and gentleness and patience of the Man who walked and taught among the Galilean hills.[1]

In the next place, Paul advances beyond this, as all the Apostles do, because he keeps in the presence of the risen and ascended Lord. He does not stop at Calvary, or at the empty tomb, or on the hill-top near Bethany. He sees Jesus "crowned with glory and honour," living, exalted, reigning, and preparing all things for His return. And perhaps this is to some the front of his offending. He does not sadly and reverently close the record with the Cross. He keeps the page open, because he believes that Christ will still inscribe upon it. He believes, in short, that the heavenly Lord fulfils His earthly word: Christ manifests Himself, and the Spirit, whose activity He foretold and promised, takes of the things that are His and

[1] According to Keim (*Jesus of Nazara*, i. 52) there can be no doubt whatever that Paul's faith in Christ rested on a knowledge of Christ's life "sufficiently comprehensive to justify all the results of his reasoning, and to present to his mind, either on the ground of his own observation or that of others, the picture of a character without spot and full of nobility. Moreover, this knowledge of the Apostle's is not the fruit of a blind acceptance of unexamined Christian tradition, picked up here and there, but, as the case of his inquiry into the evidences of the resurrection shows, was arrived at by means of a lucid, keen, searching, sceptical observation, comparison, collection and collation of such materials as were accessible to him." Commenting on Keim's examination of Paul's testimony, Knowling (*Witness of the Epistles*, p. 49) says, "What strikes us is, not merely the remarkable harmony which he admits between the Epistles and the Gospels, but also the value which he attaches to the character of the witness, a value which might at least suggest more careful consideration to the shallow thought which dismisses St. Paul without more ado as 'this strange man,' this madman, this fanatic." On Paul's knowledge of Christ, cf. Knowling's *Witness of the Epistles*, chs. i. and ii., especially the interesting historical retrospect of the latter; Beyschlag's *N.T. Theology*, ii. 20; Somerville's *St. Paul's Conception of Christ*, pp. 263–265; Forrest's *Christ of History*, pp. 325–328; Keim's *Jesus of Nazara*, i. 48–59; Weiss' *Biblical Theology of the N.T.*, i. 277 sqq.; Sabatier's *The Apostle Paul*, pp. 76–85.

shows them unto men. Paul knows more, because, guided by Him who guides unto all truth, he follows on to know. He declares the living Christ, revealed to him in the solemn experiences of his own soul and in historic fact; and to the chariot wheels of this Saviour, still travelling in the greatness of His strength, he enchains his life.

Finally, the Christ whom Paul presents is the Christ who has proved to be the saving power of the world. It cannot be denied that the gospel which was received with gladness, which began to change the life and traditions, and to overthrow the religions and philosophies, of the ancient world, was the gospel that Paul preached. It is the same gospel that has aroused, and set on fire for Christ, most of the renowned leaders of Christendom. It has been the inspiration of the great reformers and missionaries, whose labours have blessed the world and added lustre to the name of Christian. It has formed the golden links of the chain of the evangelical succession. It has also been the strength and marrow of the leaders of Christian thought and policy in the modern world. Far from being effete, it is the profoundest theme occupying the attention of Christian scholars at this hour. Above all, it is the good tidings of great joy that are still welcomed in the experience of countless humble believers who lay themselves at the feet of Christ. The Saviour is to-day what He was to the Apostle at the beginning, the Christ who died and rose and lives; delivered for our offences, raised again for our justification, by whom also we have access by faith into grace, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

# I.

# THE THESSALONIAN EPISTLES.

Now this straining of the whole forces of the soul, and the overpowering conviction of so great and glorious a possession, were inevitably attended by a danger, the danger, namely, of excitement and self-glorification. The mere excitement might cause a believer to feel himself no longer at home within the limitations of common life, to imagine that all it offered him was insufficient, to think that every moment should be entirely devoted to the sacred cause, and, wherever possible, to public exertions on its behalf. Therefore the task which we now see the Apostle performing was especially urgent in this early period. He sought to prune away this excrescence, and ranked with his fundamental warnings and counsels the necessity of seeing that their honour was involved in living quietly, in each attending to his own business, and working with his own hands.—**Weizsäcker.**

# THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

THIS, it is almost universally allowed, is the earliest of Paul's Epistles. It was probably written late in the year 50 or early in 51, about fifteen years after his conversion, and about twenty years after the death of Christ.

It is thus not only the first of Paul's writings preserved to us, but very probably the earliest book of the New Testament.[1] It was written before any of the Gospels were reduced from notes and oral tradition to their present form. Hence it is a book of exceeding interest and value. In it we have our first testimony to the Lord Jesus, reaching back to within easy memory of His time. Already we behold Him spoken of as Lord and Son of God, who died for us, who rose again from the dead, who ascended into heaven, there to be interceded with as the guide and strength of His people, while His Apostles and followers continue on the earth, receiving His word and His Spirit, abounding in the labour of faith and love and in the patience

[1] Some authorities, *e.g.*, Zahn, place Galatians before 1 Thessalonians by some two or three months, and the Epistle of James about three years before either. Zahn's date for James' Epistle is *c.* 50 A.D. (*Einleitung*, ii. 645). Michaelis, Hänlein, Hausrath, and Pfleiderer also reckon Galatians the first of the Paulines. Cf. Clemen, *Die Chronologie der paulinischen Briefe*, p. 292; and Knowling, on Paul. Epp., *Ency. Brit.*, 10th ed., xxxi. 583–4.

The authenticity of 1 Thessalonians has been challenged by Schrader, Baur, Holsten, and the writers of the Dutch school. But it is accepted with little or no hesitation by the great majority of scholars, including not only all English writers, but men of such various standpoints as Pfleiderer, Holtzmann, Lipsius, Hase, Hilgenfeld, Mangold, Wittichen, Jülicher, Harnack, Renan, Godet, De Pressensé, Reuss, Sabatier, Schmiedel, Von Soden, Clemen, and Zahn.

of hope, looking for that hidden but glorious time when He shall come again with all His saints, and when they who remain shall be caught in rapture to be for ever with Him.

This Epistle comes, then, when Paul was already midway in his Christian career, deeply experienced as a preacher of the gospel, and far advanced in missionary service. We may briefly recall his relations with the Macedonian city to whose converts it was written.

The first series of labours which had Pisidian Antioch for its centre, and which extended through the southern cities of Asia Minor, was over, and the second had begun. This also included many cities in Asia Minor, but it was destined to pass far beyond them. Under the guidance of the Spirit, Paul came to the sea-coast of Troas, and to the borders of a new world. There he stood hesitating, not knowing whether to venture farther West, or to turn back and labour anew in the well-known fields. It was a crisis in his career, and the appealing vision of the man of Macedonia decided him. He made the crossing that proved so momentous, not only in his own history, but in the history of the Western world. He landed on Macedonian soil, and preached the gospel first in the town of Philippi. But he was not permitted long to engage unmolested in his good work. A tumult was raised against him in Philippi, and, in spite of his Roman citizenship, he was beaten with many stripes and cast into prison—the first prophetic reception of the herald of the Cross in Europe.

But having put his hand to the plough, Paul was not the man to look back, however arduous and discouraging his task might be. With Silas, and probably also with Timothy, he departed from Philippi, and still continued to hold his face to the West.

To his wearied and disappointed heart, stung with the ignominy of his treatment, and to his frail flesh still tingling with the cruelty of his scourging, the journey on which he now entered must have been a refreshing balm. All nature seemed to bend over him in a ministry of love.

He proceeded through a smiling valley, surrounded by lofty mountain peaks. Large villages were to be seen lying in every fold of the hills. The splendid Roman road was made of great blocks of marble, and, almost at every step, deep wells of limpid water, and the shady foliage of spreading plane trees, offered themselves to him. Down by the sea he passed through the busy town of Amphipolis, and then, turning inland, through Apollonia. But he did not halt in these places. On he went until he had completed a journey of about a hundred miles, when, crossing a low range of mountains, he came within sight of his goal, the great seaport of Thessalonica, lying under the very shadow of snowy and fabled Olympus. There that god-haunted hill is seen to tower aloft in all its splendour. "The snows of its summit look like an ethereal dwelling suspended in space. But, alas! the holy mountain was already desolate. Men had climbed it, and perceived that gods no longer dwelt there."[1]

We imagine him, then, entering this great city of about 200,000 inhabitants. He comes with no pomp, heralded by no praise; he is neither expected nor desired. A poor, unhappy-looking man, a member of a despised race, and a toiler at a common trade, tramping along the dusty road, with nothing remarkable about him, save perhaps the light of a strange enthusiasm burning in his eyes, he plunges into the city, and is immediately swallowed in the busy crowds of its streets. The place is famous for its market in goats' hair, and that suits him. He seeks a humble lodging, and begins to work for wages at his trade, weaving the coarse black hair into serviceable tent-cloth.

Who could have thought that an entrance so lowly, so insignificant, was to be fraught with such memorable results, and that the chief thing now to interest the Christian world in that proud city is, that it sheltered the Apostle of Jesus for a few months, gave him the opportunity to make a few humble converts, and then rose up against him and caused him to flee from its gates? How

[1] Renan, *St. Paul*, p. 157.

little we are able to appreciate the true significance of events happening amongst us! We are so keen-sighted, and yet the trickling streams and sources of history are despised till they become mighty. So it was among the wise and prudent in Thessalonica.

It was a famous city in Paul's time, and had enjoyed a history of increasing prosperity for nearly four hundred years. It rose in gently-sloping terraces at the head of a magnificent bay in the Ægean, and through it ran the great Egnatian highway that connected Rome with the East. Thus both by land and sea it was fitted to become a commercial centre. It was the capital of one of the divisions of Macedonia, and was endowed by Rome with all the liberties of a free city. Cicero, who visited it often, and sought its shelter in exile, spoke of it lovingly as "lying in the very lap of the Empire."

To-day it has sadly dwindled, and fallen from its high estate. It is under the rule of the Turk, and its population of some 80,000 or 90,000 is almost equally composed of Turks and Greeks and Jews, many of the last being descendants of exiles from Spain. Its prevailing religion is Mohammedan, and its noble Byzantine churches have long been turned into mosques.[1] Sailing into its harbour from the sea, one will still find it lovely as a dream. Its white and painted walls, its domes and glancing minarets, its groves of cypresses, its crowning citadel, and its background of opalescent snow, enchant the traveller. But come nearer, and all the glamour of its beauty fades away. Its variegated crowds are as fanatical and as turbulent as of old; and its narrow, tortuous streets, with their muddy puddles, and wallowing cattle, and ruinous houses, are as squalid and pestilential as only those of a Mohammedan seaport can be.

Paul, however, found it in the heyday of its repute. But he had not entered it merely to weave tent-cloth, maintaining himself partly thereby, and partly by the gifts

[1] This, however, may be counted a gain in some ways, as it has secured their almost perfect preservation.

which friends in Philippi were good enough to send him once and again. He had come to preach the gospel. Sabbath wore round, and he began in the Jewish synagogue. His audience were surprised at his message, and for three successive Sabbaths they came together to hear him. Then their surprise gave way to indignation and contempt. For he told them, what had once filled his own breast with ire, that the Messiah had been outcast and crucified. They could not permit him to defile their courts with such blasphemous teaching. He accordingly turned to the Gentiles. They listened to him, and he began to make converts. It is recorded that some well-connected Jewish women also adhered to him; but undoubtedly the believers were chiefly composed of the humble toilers of the city, men who welcomed the call to become members of a spiritual kingdom, and who dared to lift their thoughts to a heavenly life through the crucified Christ. They were not rich, and they had no church. They only met together in the rooms or courtyards of their own houses. But they met, and they were organised and built up in a humble way. They turned from their idols to serve the living God, and with timid yet hopeful hearts they accepted the new way as the law of their life.

But this state of things did not last very long.[1] The Jews pursued their fellow-countryman with malicious eyes. They were the more enraged because they perceived that some of their number still wistfully clung to him. Determined to put an end to his labours, they called to their aid the idle rabble, the loiterers of the streets and wharves, the riffraff lazzaroni, who were ever ready for any kind of mischief. They soon succeeded in raising a tumult. They gave out that Paul was a disloyalist, a sower of sedition, a man who set up a new king as a rival to the imperial Cæsar. The house where he lived was surrounded, and Jason, his host, was seized, dragged before the magistrates, and with proper irony bound over to keep the peace. As for the Apostle, kind hands concealed him, and kept him from

[1] Paul probably spent the summer of the year 50 in Thessalonica.

the outrages which would undoubtedly have been heaped upon him. Under cover of night he fled from the city.

We now behold him courting the shadows and the darkness, speeding along the narrow winding streets while men slept, out through the western gate, and on with restless haste for fifty miles, dreading at every turn lest he should be overtaken and dragged back to persecution and prison. What a strange triumphal entry the gospel had into the West! What colossal faith and courage were required to persevere with it! We talk of heroism, but there is no heroism in human history to excel this—the plodding westward march of this feeble, despised, but undaunted Jew, going he knew not whither, to meet and accomplish he knew not what, only assured that God was with him, and that his mission was one of grace and love.

Paul came to Berea, and from Berea, finding himself still pursued by the enmity of the Jews, he sailed round to Athens. All the time his heart was consumed with anxiety for the converts he had left behind him. He knew the kind of storm they would have to face, and the bitterness of the attacks their tormentors would make upon them. In his vivid imagination and sensitive sympathy, he could understand all that was happening, all the insidious movements against their faith, all the lies and slanders, all the interests and temptations that would combine to drag them back to the old life. Would they be able to bear it, those humble artisans of Thessalonica? Would they resist and overcome, or would they be broken up, and all his efforts to evangelise them swept to the winds?

This was the state of his mind regarding them when he was at Athens. Fain would he have gone back to them had it been possible. As it was, unable to rest, he sent Timothy to bring him news. He was in Corinth[1] when his messenger returned with good tidings. The Thessalonians were not only steadfast, but were making

[1] The arrival at Corinth was probably at the close of the year 50; the Apostle stayed there about eighteen months, two winters and a summer, leaving in the late spring of 52.

progress. They were unshaken in their faith; and notwithstanding broadcast calumnies against the Apostle's disinterestedness and courage, their attachment to him increased. They sent him the kindliest greetings, and assured him of their affection. And so the great heart had its load of anxiety removed, and, in his own graphic way, he says "he lived again." His soul was like a watered garden, and he knew not how to praise God enough for so signal a mercy.

It was in these circumstances that the Epistle was written. Paul wrote it to give vent to his feelings of gratitude and joy. We do not wonder, therefore, that its characteristics are those of gentleness and tenderness. There is little declaration of doctrine in it. There did not need to be. It is absurd to be always looking for the Apostle to say the same things. Criticism is a blundering tool when it is untempered by the saving graces of imagination and common sense. It is most likely, from his circumstances and natural temperament, that Paul was a very frequent writer of letters; it is most unlikely that he felt bound to frame them all after one model, and that the Epistle to the Romans. No one can realise the occasion which called for this brief Epistle without perceiving how simply and naturally it fits that occasion, how well it fulfils its purpose, and expresses the mind of the Apostle at the time.

The Epistle rejoices at the good news from Thessalonica. Yet it is not altogether confined to congratulation. That would scarcely have harmonised with all the facts of the case. The clouds of calumny that hung over the memory of Paul's life in Thessalonica might be the better of being dispelled by an electric flash. A sad perplexity also, that had arisen in the case of some who had lost friends, whom they had expected to remain alive till the glorious Coming of Christ, had to be dealt with. Besides, there could not fail to be need for notes of warning and good counsel. Converts only a few months redeemed from paganism, could not possibly be already perfect. Some taints of the past, falls in the present, and doubts and misapprehensions regarding the future, were certain to exist among them.

Accordingly we find references also to such a tempted and imperfect life.

The Epistle consists of five chapters, and clearly divides itself into two parts at the close of the third chapter. The first part is tender and personal; the second more practical and didactic.

Paul begins, as he usually does in his Epistles, by thanking God for all the good he has reason to think is in his hearers, their labours of love and patience of hope. He recalls with delight his own short stay and experience among them, the power and assurance of the gospel, the readiness with which they received it, the fame with which they spread it abroad. He speaks also in earnest tones in a kind of self-defence, quite conscious that some are at work undermining his influence, misrepresenting his motives, and defaming his good name. It evidently touches him all the more keenly that these enemies are chiefly among his own brethren, the Jews. Seldom has he any harsh things to say of them. Usually his mood towards them is one of intense longing for their salvation. But now he cannot withhold a glance of righteous indignation in their direction. It is provoked by all he has recently suffered at their hands, by the knowledge that their enmity does not diminish, and by the sad thought that there seems little likelihood of any change in their attitude to Christ. Perhaps also his language is intensified by his experiences in Corinth itself. Even if the letter were written before the Jews haled him there to the judgment-seat of Gallio, it was probably not written before he had had experience among them of many alien looks and unfriendly acts, harbingers of the coming storm. Against such malignant detractors Paul defends his ministry. He declares that he delivered only what he had received from God. This he had done with all disinterestedness and gentleness, maintaining his independence, and seeking no glory or favour of man, as his converts very well knew. Then he speaks of his present relations and feelings towards them, and how much he desires to come to them again. Yea, it is his prayer day and night

that he may see them once more, and continue to serve them in the faith. The first part of the letter concludes with a prayer, that the Lord would make them to increase and abound in love, and establish their hearts unblamable in holiness, at the Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

In all this we see the closeness and tenderness of the tie that bound the Apostle to his adherents. Verily, he sought not theirs, but them. The good news of their faith and charity was the very breath of his life, and in his great love he was ready to impart his own soul to them. He describes them as his hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing; and he could sincerely say, "For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord."

The closing section of the Epistle, including the fourth and fifth chapters, is intensely practical, and is of even more lasting importance. It deals with some of the greatest subjects of the Christian life, and ends with a perfect shower of pithy sayings, designed to linger in the mind and stimulate to earnest and godly devotion. Such are: Rejoice evermore; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings; test all things; abstain from every form of evil.

But there are some things in the Epistle on which we cannot but perceive that the Apostle lays special emphasis. These more prominent subjects may be specified as: (1) the sanctifying of the new life, (2) its good order, and (3) its peculiar hope, the Coming again of Christ.

1. Paul lays much stress on the necessity of sanctifying the new life. He is deeply concerned for a life of social purity among the Thessalonians, and he says so very plainly. He reiterates with great distinctness, as a commandment of the Lord Jesus and the will of God, that Christians are not called to uncleanness but unto holiness. This was a high ideal to raise before the minds of the dwellers in that old Græco-Roman city by the sea, and there was only too much reason for it to be raised. Paul knew very well that the pagan religion from which his converts were called, had given even sensual vice a place

in its sacred rites, and that few were taught to regard such impurity with any sense of shame. He was writing, too, in Corinth, the most profligate city in the world, and under the shadow of a rock whose gleaming heights were crowned with a temple openly dedicated to lust. He saw before his eyes all the mad and ruinous results of the vicious life. He saw it eating like a canker into the heart of society, blighting like a plague all that was good in men, undermining and destroying the life of the individual, the family, and the State. Above all, he beheld its deep and essential antagonism to the new life of the Spirit. He does not indeed labour, as a moralist might, to bring home to the conscience the awful physical and social havoc which impurity works. It is characteristic of him that he lifts the matter at once into the highest sphere of all. He is speaking to those who believe in a spiritual life, a life of Divine fellowship, united to Christ, and he warns of an evil which will inevitably strangle that life at its birth. A social wrong, and a sure sowing, whose infallible reaping is a whirlwind of misery and distress, it is yet more than that, a defiling of the temple of the Holy Ghost, driving Him from the breast in which He has come to dwell. More surely than in the desecrated Temple of old, when ruthless feet invaded its sacred courts, is there heard in the unclean heart a rustling of holy wings, and a whisper of a Divine voice, saying, "Let us depart." There was one in that ancient world who knew this well, and who at one time would have brushed such warning aside as "unmanly advice." But by God's mercy he lived to cry, "My life being such, could it be called life, O my God?"[1] This is the profoundest and saddest view of the evil against which Paul so solemnly warned—it is not life, but living death. It is death to all that is spiritual and best, paralysis in goodness, blindness to God Himself—

> "That sense of ruin, which is worse than pain,
> That masterful negation and collapse
> Of all that makes us men."

[1] Augustine, *Confessions*, bk. iii.

Well, therefore, does the Apostle call on the converts to reflect upon this, that it is not so much the despising of man as the despising of God, who has bestowed upon them His Holy Spirit. And well might he pray that God would sanctify them wholly, that spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the Coming of the Lord Jesus. Without the growing witness of purer lives, they would give the lie to the faith that their Lord dwelt in them as a redeeming power.

2. Another matter evidently lay much on the Apostle's mind. He strives to impress upon his converts the need of good order in the life to which they are called. This appears in many forms in the Epistle—in exhortations to brotherly love, to honesty, to diligence, to peace, to patience, to the following of good, to the esteem of those who labour among them in the Lord.

There were many things undoubtedly that must have tended to a spirit of unrest and unsettlement. The life to which these converts were called was new and strange; it was spiritual, and had elements in it of great mystery. It must have roused many questions, and stirred much speculation. Besides, the old was not to be doffed in a moment. It clung to them with its deeply engrained habits, and with many customs whose inherent evil they could not easily perceive. What relations were they to have with those who still stood rooted in the old beliefs, and whom but yesterday they had been accustomed to love and revere? Were they to renounce them? Must they break entirely from them? Were there not many neutral points in common life where they might meet and have intercourse as before? Some would raise scruples of conscience, and some would entertain none. Debates would arise, and divisions, and inner circles would be formed who would say, "We are holier than ye." Many, no doubt, would lay hold of the great watchwords of the faith, still imperfectly understood, and would abuse them. The very liberty to which they were called would prove a snare. It would lead untutored souls to rebellion against their teachers, and to false notions of independence and duty

Indeed, the greater the power with which they dealt, the more grace and enlightenment were needed to use it well. And grace and enlightenment among them were yet in their infancy. Above all, the supreme doctrine of the Coming again of the Lord in power and majesty, as an event daily and hourly to be expected, when the present affairs of this sad, sinful world should be wound up, and a new kingdom established, with the glorified faithful as princes in the Messianic train, was a doctrine which manifestly had in it strong temptations to indifference and contempt of earthly things. Workmen would fling down their tools, merchants forget their trade, and parents neglect their homes. Why should a man toil, when to-morrow he was to become an heir of glory? Why should he care to preserve what should so soon be dispersed and destroyed? Days would be spent in dreamy speculation and indolent gossip, and this, no doubt, would be dignified by many as "waiting for the Lord."

These are the things Paul seems to have been aware of, and to have dreaded. They lead him to the exhortations of which we have spoken. He is jealous of the reputation the converts will make in the world. The lives of Christians are the open book that all men read. What unspeakable loss if these lives are distinguished only by a lamentable display of wrangling disputes and lack of charity; if, after all, that which is good is not supreme, if the unruly are unchecked, the feeble despised, that which lies to the hand to do is left undone, and spiritual pride, and an idle fanaticism and futile gazing into heaven, stand forth as the distinguishing marks of the Christian faith! No wonder in such a case if the world should scoff, and if the chariot of the kingdom should lumber and drag. Not only so, if these things are not mastered, the life of Christianity itself will dwindle and perish. It will be choked by a rank growth of what are *not* the fruits of the Spirit. Things will live and be rampant which are not the things of Christ. Let us remember that the lowly graces which are despised are the most essential. Forbearance, charity, patience, the seeking of that which is

good both among ourselves and for all men—it is the highest wisdom to direct attention to these. There we find the true expression of our faith, and there we have the surest witness that the Lord of all grace abideth in us.

3. Finally, and most important of all, Paul speaks much in this Epistle of the Christian hope, the Coming of the Lord Jesus. This, indeed, is the distinctive feature of the Epistle.

There can be no doubt that at this time the subject of the Second Coming was very much in the Apostle's thoughts; and when he was in Thessalonica it must have entered very largely into the burden of his message. It had appealed powerfully to the imagination and conscience, to the hopes and fears, of his hearers.

Among all Christians in that first age of the faith, so soon after the disappearance of our Lord from the earth, there was a very confident expectation of His speedy return. It was thought that the existing generation would not pass away before He would be seen descending to establish His reign on the earth. Jewish elements and mundane conceptions were largely mixed up with this hope. Nor was it wholly unnatural. Our Lord had undoubtedly spoken of the Coming of the Son of Man in more senses than one; and in one sense, in such an historical crisis, for example, as the Fall of Jerusalem, it was imminent enough. But reflection on much that He had said of the growth of His kingdom in the world, might have led them to anticipate that the Coming, in the sense of the Final Judgment, would not be to-day or to-morrow. All His sayings and parables that pointed in a missionary direction, to the preaching of the gospel to all nations, to the growth of the seed, and to the ripening of the harvest, suggested something of the nature of an evangelical era, and a slow development. Paul himself was absorbed with the missionary idea. The consuming passion of his life was the conversion of the Gentiles. That, he saw clearly, was the Master's will. He needed perhaps to see more clearly that it would take time to fulfil it, and that the Divine Husbandman could wait with patience.

For Paul, too, seems to have expected that the Lord would return before he died. In his great ardour, he did not apparently think that the compassing of the Gentiles with the gospel would require more than his own lifetime. Experience gradually taught him to modify this conception; and if his language in this Epistle leads us to believe, that personally he had a hope that he would be living when Christ came again, we soon find in other Epistles that he has come to think of himself rather as meeting Christ only through the gate of death, and that he also will be one of those whom God will "raise up."[1]

Even now, however, he sees enough to believe that it will be no real loss if it should be so. "The dead in Christ shall rise first"; and they "that are alive," that are left unto the Coming of the Lord, "shall in nowise precede them that are fallen asleep." That is to say, death, even if it come, does not really annihilate the Christian hope.

To such a declaration the Apostle was led in a very pathetic way. Though it were at most but a few months since Paul had been in Thessalonica, death had already been busy in his little congregation there. Sorrowing hearts were perplexed. Those who had died were believers, and it seemed as if the interment in the "narrow shelves" were a cruel mockery of the hopes they had entertained. They were dead; they would not participate in the glories of the Lord's appearing. It is in answer to this perplexity that Paul writes his classic passage, a passage that has been read in so many darkened homes, and by so many gravesides, for eighteen hundred years: "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."

How many hearts have been cheered and comforted by these great words! The hopeless grief of the pagan world, the inconsolable mourning—how they are dispelled as by a beam of light! Here is no thought of a final extinction

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 14; 2 Cor. iv. 14.

or an endless night,[1] no encouragement to the funereal wailing which Chrysostom so eloquently rebuked, because it showed that the Christian heart belied the Christian faith. Rather here is the sweetest and tenderest assurance, a blessed apocalypse. They that "sleep in Jesus"! Surely if they sleep they shall do well. They shall wake again, and come in His happy company. Not without them shall they who are alive at the Coming be caught up into a glorified life. What matters it then? Living or dead, they shall be for ever with the Lord.

We must not misunderstand the Apostle. He may have had the hope that the Lord would come even in his day. But it was not all his hope. Though he be disappointed of that, he is not left in dismay. If not in that way, yet through an entrance scarcely less glorious, he too will come to be with Christ. He very clearly perceived that the quenching of this special hope was not the annihilation of his portion in the kingdom of heaven. Christ had not redeemed him merely to let the grave steal an ignoble victory at the close. Deeper than all dreams and desires, however bright they might be, lay this rooted assurance, that whether living or dying he was the Lord's.

Yet Paul believed in the Coming. He was not in any vital sense resiling from what he had already said. He was certain it would take place. He was only uncertain

[1] On the views of the ancients regarding a future life, cf. Salmond's *Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, bk. i. ch. vii., On the Beliefs of the Greeks and Romans. Also Döllinger, *Gentile and Jew*, ii. 139–146, and Pfleiderer, *Philosophy of Religion*, iv. ch. vii.

In *Studies Subsidiary to Butler*, Mr. Gladstone writes: "The doctrine of immortality has impressed but slight footprints upon the Roman literature. The letters and poetry of consolation, which antiquity has bequeathed to us, are especially instructive in this respect. They are miserably pale and thin, although in various cases singularly touching. Nor did matters improve with the lapse of time. Lucretius rebukes the folly of those who quail before the idea of punishments after death, and bends the whole force of his great genius to constructing a magnificent apology for the doctrine of extinction: and the grave Juvenal informs us that none in his day believed in the survival of the soul, unless such as had not emerged from boyhood." P. 159. Cf. the letters that passed between Sulpicius and Cicero on the death of Cicero's daughter Tullia, *Letters of Cicero*, bk. xi. letters iii., iv.

as to when. He could not and dared not rashly define that great hour. He knew that the times and the seasons God kept to Himself. One other thing also he knew, that Christ had warned that He would come unexpectedly, taking a careless world unawares, even as a thief cometh in the night.

But there are some for whom the coming of a thief has no terrors. These are they in whose life there is no night, no deep shadows of sin, no blackness of darkness.

By a beautiful turn of the metaphor Paul finds his way to a most earnest and practical conclusion of his great theme. "Ye are the children of light," he says, "and the children of the day." If so, it means that for you there is no fear. But it means this also, that, being so, you will not be guilty of the things of night: sleeping—that is, heedless and unconscious of the great interests of time and eternity; drunken—that is, drowning in sensuality that life of spirit and soul and body which God meant to grow in holiness. Not these will distinguish you if you are worthy of this great name, "children of light," but sobriety, and the breastplate of faith and love, and the helmet of the hope of salvation, the intense longing that God may sanctify you and preserve you blameless to the Lord's Coming.

For sooner or later He shall come. It is the great hope from which the Church has never gone back. To it she still turns her expectant eyes.

> "Lord, come away;
> Why dost Thou stay?
> Thy road is ready; and Thy paths, made straight,
> With longing expectation wait
> The consecration of Thy beauteous feet."

# THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.



This Epistle, like the First, was occasioned by news from Thessalonica while Paul was still in Corinth. This later news, probably only a few months later, was not so favourable as the first had been. For one thing, the Christians in Thessalonica were, like Paul himself, enduring increasing persecution. Nevertheless, by God's grace, both he and they were surmounting such trials with invincible steadfastness and patience. Sad therefore as the suffering was, it was not without spiritual compensations. The shadows only intensified the lights in which the Christian heart must ever rejoice.

It was another part of the tidings that filled Paul with the greatest concern. Certain elements in his teaching at Thessalonica, and indeed some parts of his former Epistle, were being woefully misrepresented. These had regard to the Second Coming of Christ, and to the end of the present world. It has never been easy for any one to speak or write on these subjects without being misunderstood. Men quickly allow their imaginations and emotions to play around such themes. They fly off at a hint. They dogmatically interpret the most cautious reference. A vague longing becomes the most inspired certainty, and the most obviously figurative language is interpreted with a fatal literalism. So Paul now found.

Many in Thessalonica understood the Apostle to mean that the day of the Lord had dawned, and that their eyes were to behold the Last Things and the Coming in glory. It was in vain that he had carefully avoided so positive an

assertion, and that by word and deed he had rather shown that there was no call to be other than "diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." The contrary belief obtained mastery over some. They assumed that the very heart of the new message was, that the return of the Lord was imminent, and that the old world was ripe for doom. The consequence was that Paul heard that the Christian community in Thessalonica was in a state of perilous excitement. Men's thoughts were occupied with little else than this. They could think and speak only of the great world-catastrophe which they daily expected. Some were on the border of religious mania; some no doubt had crossed the border. Many forsook their employment, and bitterly upbraided those who differed from them.

The fact is that when Paul came westward, and began to preach, as he undoubtedly did, the doctrine of the Second Coming and his expectation of beholding it, he found a state of society peculiarly ready to receive this doctrine. Men seized on it as the chief part of his message, simply because it harmonised so well with their prevailing moods.

All through the Roman Empire at this time, there was an uneasy and undefined feeling of impending change, a nervous anticipation and dread of it. Tacitus and other historians unite in depicting an almost universal fever of expectation and alarm.[1] The atmosphere of the political world was still and oppressive, like the sultry calm that precedes a storm. Under the debauchery of Claudius and the shameless intrigues and crimes of Agrippina, the imperial court was sinking into an abyss of infamy and contempt. Men's minds were strained. Every event of an unusual or startling kind was interpreted as a sign from the celestial or the infernal powers. With superstitious sensitiveness people looked for auguries, and beheld them everywhere. Natural phenomena that in a normal state would have produced no impression, were regarded with an

[1] Cf. *Annals*, bks. xii. and xiv.; also Renan, *L'Antechrist*, pp. 321–339.

exaggerated importance, and spoken of with bated breath. Birds of evil omen and swarms of bees were said to have settled on the Capitol. The standards and tents of the soldiers were set in a blaze by lightning. Monstrous births were recorded, and significant deaths. Scanty harvests and consequent famine were regarded as heralds of still greater calamity. Above all, frequent earthquakes were sending moral tremors through the world. Many towns, especially in the East, were continually tumbling into ruin. Fiery clouds were seen in the heavens, weaving themselves into fantastic and portentous shapes; spectral warriors fought fiercely in their crimson depths, and the showers that fell from them were showers of blood. Flaming comets were also observed trailing their trains of fire across the sky, and the sun itself "was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse." Thus the physical and the moral worlds were convulsed together. Everywhere people spoke of the wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath, and hailed them as "the prologue to the omen coming on."

> "When these prodigies
> Do so conjointly meet, let not men say
> 'These are their reasons, they are natural.'"[1]

It is clear that with such a state of things the message of Paul marvellously chimed, or seemed to chime. He spoke of the Lord descending from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of

[1] Such seasons of unrest and foreboding have not been uncommon even in the history of the modern world. Readers of Church history will recall the violent commotions caused by the Anabaptists in the sixteenth century. The period also immediately preceding the political changes in our own country in 1832 affords an interesting parallel. "Everywhere the signs of change were visible. The horizon was overcast with the dark clouds of coming danger. Natural disasters were added to political alarms. A mysterious and intractable pestilence ravaged the great cities. Men's hearts were failing them for fear and for looking after those things that were coming on the earth. Religious people, assembling themselves together for the study of sacred prophecy, discerned all around them the signs of the end, and persuaded themselves that the world had already entered upon that Great Tribulation which is appointed to precede the Second Coming of Christ" (G. W. E. Russell, *Life of Gladstone*, p. 27).

God. He undoubtedly appeared to imply that they who were then alive would behold this Advent, and be caught up with the saints in the air.

The consequence was that men who naturally were inclined to extreme views, and who were excitedly ready for the most dramatic issues, eagerly claimed the Apostle on their side. Some declared, perhaps believed, that they were under the influence of the Spirit, and had been divinely inspired to teach this doctrine. Others, still less scrupulous, appear to have brought forward letters which they averred had the Apostle's authority. Paul disowns these, and to guard against their repetition he begins in this Epistle to take precaution by writing the closing salutation in his own hand. "This," he says, "is a token in every Epistle: so I write."

It was the news of all this misunderstanding, this religious ferment and disorder, that impelled the Apostle to write so soon a second Epistle to the Thessalonians. This error of theirs had already borne unhappy fruits, and, unchecked, was likely to bring the name of Christ into disrepute. His purpose therefore is to check it. The chief aim of the new Epistle is to correct, to calm, to steady, the excited life of the infant Church. It is a much shorter letter than the first. Its tones are deeper; its shadows are more sombre. To us it has some passages that are almost incomprehensible in their mystery, however well they may have been understood by those to whom they were first addressed. At the same time it has many utterances of deep practical wisdom, great earnestness, and lofty spirituality.[1]

Paul attempts to meet the case in a threefold way:

[1] The authenticity has been questioned not only by those who reject 1 Thessalonians, but even by some who accept that Epistle. Adverse criticism arose only in the nineteenth century. Among recent writers who reject 2 Thessalonians are Hausrath, Holtzmann, Pfleiderer, Weizsäcker, Von Soden; favourable to it are most English scholars, also Renan, Reuss, Godet, Weiss, Sabatier, Jülicher, Gloël, Klöpper, Bousset, Lipsius, Zahn. It has been thought in some respects not to harmonise with 1 Thessalonians, and to exhibit anachronism, but the chief ground of objection is that the apocalyptic passage on the Man of Sin is regarded as un-Pauline.

(1) by more clearly defining his teaching regarding the Coming of Christ; (2) by renewed exhortations to diligence and good order, pointing out the necessity of maintaining discipline against those who persistently disregard such rules; and (3) by a tender, prayerful spirit, whereby he invokes the Divine aid, earnestly commending his converts to the grace of God for patience, for consolation, and for peace.

## I.

The Apostle endeavours more clearly to define his teaching regarding the Coming of Christ.

The first reference to the subject is in the first chapter, but there it is with regard to a matter of which there is no doubt, concerning which he and his readers are in perfect harmony. This is, that the Coming of the Lord is a Coming for Judgment, for the adjustment and holding level of life's balance; when the mountains shall be brought low, the valleys exalted, and the crooked things made straight; when good men shall receive the reward of their goodness, often so ill-requited now, and evil men shall receive the reward of their iniquity, and find how bitter is the retribution of their present wrongdoing.

This assurance rests securely on a twofold basis; on the one hand, that his brethren are now enduring cruel wrongs and drinking of the Master's sorrowful cup, and, on the other, that God is righteous, holy, just, and true, and will not, in a universe in which He is supreme, suffer these sad experiences to be the final issue. A blessed compensation is in store for those bleeding, persecuted lives. It is vain to tell men who are suffering unjustly that it would be nobler if they simply endured without looking for a time of coming peace and restitution. Paul touches a deeper conviction of the human heart when he teaches that the affairs of this world need righting, that only God can do it, and that God will do it. Good men are entitled to entertain this as a sure hope. Some, alas! can look to it only with feelings of dread. The seed they have sown has

been so bad, so displeasing to God, that their harvest can only be one of indignation and loss. It is different with those who, tried by many a fiery trial, have followed in their Master's steps, enduring the cross and despising the shame. For them, as for Him, there is the joy set before them. It was to them He said: "Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

But it is only in passing that Paul makes this reference to the Last Things, so full of consolation and cheer to his readers. Having made it, he very earnestly sets himself in the second chapter to correct the error into which they had fallen regarding the expectation of the immediate Coming of Christ.

He does so by calling to their remembrance, what they were inclined to overlook, how he had told them that many things must take place before the Lord would come. Time was required for the development of these events. True, a very long time might not be necessary; many of them might live to see it; still, a period long enough to make it quite false to represent the day of Christ as "already come."

This is plain and definite enough. The difficulty, however, arises, for us at least, when the Apostle proceeds to specify the things he declares must first take place. These are three in number. (1) First there must come the apostasy of which he had told them. (2) The Man of Sin or Lawlessness shall be revealed, an incarnation of evil, the deceiver of men's souls, seating himself in the Temple of God, and usurping the very attributes of Deity. Even now he is at work, in a veiled and undeclared manner. But there is one who hinders him, so that his complete manifestation is restrained. (3) The time shall come, however, when the restraining power shall be taken out of the way, and then the full flood of iniquity shall set in, when this Wicked One shall be revealed, only to be overwhelmed by the personal Advent of the Lord, and to be consumed by the breath of His mouth.

This wonderful passage has been called the Apocalypse

of St. Paul, and in all his writings there are few more difficult to interpret. None has given rise to more idle and fantastic opinions, or brought more justly into contempt those who have applied it unwisely. Happily the day has gone by when men of reputation confidently gave it a definite and exclusive reference.

Several considerations have to be borne in mind. In the first place, Paul is dealing with a common and traditional expectation. He is not handling any new revelation peculiar to himself. In point of fact he adheres very closely to Christ's discourse on the Last Things, which is recorded in Matthew xxiv., and with which he has already, in his First Epistle, shown himself acquainted. He also unmistakably quotes certain utterances of Old Testament prophecy that must have been familiar to him and to all devout Jews as household words. The anticipation of dire distress and of awful manifestations of evil, as signalising the final struggle of good and evil and the Coming of the Christ in Judgment, was a kind of common property in Jewish thought. Even the Galilean disciples knew that there would be "signs" of His Coming, and earnestly besought our Lord to define them. The prophecies of Daniel were the chief source and starting-point of such expectations. It is possible that they may be traced farther back, and that they even have analogies in other religions, but in Daniel they are stamped with a characteristic impress which they retain to the close of the New Testament, and indeed far beyond it.

But while these expectations were fundamentally eschatological, looking forward in an ideal way to the end of the world, they continually tended to become concrete, and to take on contemporary colours. This was the more inevitable when the times were troublous, and when the whole environment seemed portentous and ominous of evil. Then the shadows began to take shape, and men ventured to give their fears a local habitation and a name. At the time when Paul wrote he was himself under the influence of this 'contemporary' expectation. He looked for all the signs to be fulfilled, and for the final catastrophe to

take place, not immediately indeed, but clearly before his earthly career was ended. He gradually ceased to entertain such an assurance, but there can be no question it was in his heart at this period. It is this blending of the ideal with the immediate outlook, which makes the interpretation so particularly difficult. In fact they are almost inextricably entangled.

Further, the difficulty is heightened by the fact that the passage is dominated by an evident reticence. We can scarcely doubt that Paul had definite conceptions in his own mind, and yet he prefers to be allusive and enigmatic. This is due to two causes: first, to the actual relation between himself and his readers on the subject; and secondly, to the nature of the subject itself. Paul feels that he does not need to be detailed and explicit to the Thessalonians; he simply needs to remind them. He had told them already what he believed, and a few general statements were all that were now necessary to recall it. We may wonder that they should so soon have forgotten such momentous matters. But it was human. They overlooked the intervening stages, in their consuming concern for the final issue. Again, the subject itself was one that called for caution in the mode of expression, both because it was to a large extent shrouded in mystery, and also because an explicit announcement would prove offensive and perilous. In this respect also Paul followed the model both of Daniel and of Christ. In Daniel there is the call to 'understand' and 'consider,' and from the manner in which Christ's sayings are recorded, it is evident the evangelist was aware that far more would be understood by an intelligent man than was actually expressed. This has always been a characteristic of the treatment of such subjects. Hence the saying of Hippolytus: "This, beloved, I communicate to thee with fear. . . . For if the blessed prophets before us, although they knew it, were unwilling openly to proclaim it in order not to prepare any perplexity for the souls of men, but imparted it secretly in parables and enigmas, saying, 'whoso readeth let him understand,' how much more danger do we run if we

openly utter what was couched by them in covert language!"[1]

Paul, then, speaks of an apostasy as one of the signs which should precede the "day of the Lord." It has been suggested that the word might have a political significance, and be used to indicate a rebellion of the Jews against Rome, which would lead to such a catastrophe as actually took place in the Fall of Jerusalem.[2] The general view, however, is preferable and more natural, that the reference is to a decay of faith, a falling away from loyalty to the living God, on the part of those who once held it. We have no doubt that those thus guilty, are those who are also described in ver. 12 as having disbelieved the truth, and had pleasure in unrighteousness. We also believe it most likely that Paul is thinking of the Jews as those who are about to fall into this great defection. Their rejection of Jesus, and their constant and bitter opposition to His Apostles and their message, undoubtedly appeared to him as a disastrous denial of the grace of God, and one that grew rather than diminished. Perhaps at this stage the thought of a Christian apostasy was slightly foreign to Paul's mind, but experience, as well as express revelation, taught him ere the end of his life that that also would be a sad part of the latter-day signs (1 Tim. iv. 1). It seems to us highly probable that in the thought of the apostasy

[1] Ch. xxix., cit. Bousset, *Antichrist Legend*, p. 31.

[2] Mr. Askwith, *Introduction to Thessalonian Epistles*, ch. v., adopts this suggestion with some hesitation, and uses it in connection with an ingenious solution of the problem in the blasphemy of the Emperor-worship, and in the 'overcoming' of the world-power of Rome at the end of the struggle of the first three centuries; yet in a way, to use his own favourite expression, that is not convincing. There is an error in all theories that seek to define Paul's contemporary expectation, and then to work out its historical fulfilment. Paul's conceptions were not thus fulfilled. The conversion of Rome to Christianity in the beginning of the fourth century was in no respect the appalling "day of the Lord," the final consuming of the Lawless One with the "breath of His mouth," in any sense that Paul would have attached to these phrases. We are accustomed justly enough to speak of such events as "comings of the Lord," but the idea in Paul's mind was of the last times in the strict and absolute sense. This is not to say that his thoughts were destitute of all basis, but only that it is impossible to show that any personal and present application fulfilled his prophecy.

the saying of Jesus may have haunted the Apostle's mind: "Many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."

Paul also reminds the Thessalonians that the Man of Lawlessness, as an evil power of the most blasphemous presumptions, is already at work, but as yet only as a "mystery," that is, as a secret force not fully manifested. It is not necessary to speculate as to what was exactly in his thoughts. There was enough evil in that dark world both to sadden and alarm the heart. Elymas was not the only sorcerer who was a "child of the devil, and enemy of all righteousness," nor Simon Magus the only one who was in the "gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." Paul might have said with John, "Even now are there many antichrists." One cannot help thinking also that Caligula's impious attempt (A.D. 40) to set up his statue in the Temple at Jerusalem, had a sting in it that continued to rankle. It had roused the Jewish race to the very core. No wonder, though it failed, that such imperial arrogance seemed a portent, and a dark shadow of coming events.

There is, however, a force operating, that for a time holds back the blasphemous outburst with all its attendant havoc. This is the next thing of which Paul reminds the Thessalonians. When he was with them he had spoken of this, and they knew what he meant. And here we have a point in the interpretation on which there is almost universal agreement. This restraining power, capable for the present of holding all turbulence in check, is the power of Rome, personified in the Emperor. The Apostle does not say so distinctly, simply because he at the same time declares that this power shall be "taken away." A definite statement would have put into the hands of his enemies a weapon that they would have dearly loved to use. But his view regarding Rome as a temporary safeguard was well known to his friends, and in the Christian tradition it became common and universal. The imperial power, imperfect in many respects, was yet the bulwark of law and order; after it the deluge. Hence one of the most

powerful reasons for Christian supplication on behalf of the Empire. Says Tertullian: "We have also another and a greater need to pray for the Emperors, and moreover for the whole estate of the Empire, and the fortunes of Rome, knowing, as we do, that the mighty shock which hangeth over the whole world, and the end of time itself, threatening terrible and grievous things, is delayed because of the time allowed to the Roman Empire. We would not therefore experience these things, and while we pray that they may be put off, we favour the long continuance of Rome."[1]

Whether Paul thought that this restraining power would cease with the reign of Claudius, or whether he believed he discovered signs of the momentous change in some other direction, it is quite impossible to say. We only know that it was his conviction, that it would ere long cease, and that then the arch-enemy of God and man would display himself openly. He would deceive men with lying wonders, would seat himself in the Temple of God, and would arrogate to himself the honours due to God alone. He is the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition, that Wicked One, whose coming is after the working of Satan. No doubt Paul thought of a distinct person, an incarnation of evil, of whom all other evil workers had been but the heralds and the passing representations. But it does not follow that he thought of any one historically notable at the moment. He may have had such a one in his mind's eye, just as Daniel thought of Antiochus Epiphanes when he used the most lurid descriptions. Yet it is not necessary to believe this, or to distress ourselves with futile guesses as to any particular reference.

We think it much more probable that he simply thought of the Satanic spirit clothing himself in human form, the better to approach men and to deceive them, and thus to make his final and desolating effort against God and His kingdom. He would take the guise of a Messiah, and

[1] *Apology*, xxxii. So also Cyril, Jerome, Chrysostom, Lactantius, Theodoret.

thereby secure his place in the Temple, leading into still deeper spiritual bondage those who had already rejected the truth. This also was in the line of the prophetic tradition. Daniel spoke of the abomination that maketh desolate being set up in the place of the daily sacrifice; Isaiah described Lucifer's ambition as a desire to sit upon the mount of the congregation; and Christ Himself repeated the language of Daniel regarding the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place. The Apostle's idea, therefore, runs on Jewish lines, and has a Jewish character. The blindness of the Jews in falling at the feet of the false Messiah when they had rejected the true, is judicial. Their retribution is that they "believe a lie." It would be as Christ had said: "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." Paul uses only general language in describing this incarnation, but later on, in 2 Cor. vi. 15, he uses the expression, "What concord hath Christ with Belial?" and it is believed that the Greek expression "Man of Sin" is almost certainly a translation of this Hebrew name for the Evil One, the adversary of God and man.[1] Paul does not use the word Antichrist, which first occurs in John's First Epistle, but Belial and Antichrist by and by became interchangeable, as we see, for example, in the *Ascension of Isaiah*, iv. 2: "Beliar the great ruler, the king of this world, will descend . . . in the likeness of a man, a lawless king."[2]

Paul, therefore, we are inclined to believe, is, in this obscure passage, keeping largely on the lines laid down by Christ, and also on the lines of Old Testament prophecy, and, so far, of his own experience. For his experience had very naturally led him to the conviction that, hard as the Gentiles were to convert, it was in unbelieving Judaism that, as Weiss puts it, "the real seat of radical hostility

[1] So Bousset, p. 153, and Charles, *Ascension of Isaiah*, p. lxii.

[2] So also in the Sibyls. Cf. Bousset, p. 136; and on the fusion of Antichrist and Belial in 2 Thessalonians and before 60 A.D., cf. Charles, pp. lxi–lxiv. The *Ascension of Isaiah*, as we now have it, existed as early as the latter half of the second century.

to Christ" was to be found.[1] Further, this hostility, growing by what it fed on, would culminate in a still sadder apostasy. Out of the heart of it, almost as its natural product and efflorescence, would spring the False Prophet, who would debase the faithless by his wonders[2] and seductions, and even in blasphemous arrogance attempt to usurp the place of the Almighty. It is a catastrophe, however, which the iron grasp of Rome has still power to check; but when that is removed, and the iniquity is full blown, then there will be but one issue, the day of the Lord will have arrived, and Christ in His glory will blast that Wicked One with the breath of His mouth.[3]

So writes the Apostle, telling the Thessalonians no new thing. But he has evidently no great passion for the theme, for he never again returns to it in his writings. He ceases to speak in such terms. Henceforth he rather loves to dwell on the believer's spiritual union with the Redeemer, on the life which dies and rises with Christ, and which, in blessed harmony with Him, shall finally participate in His perfection and glory.

Nevertheless, his words remain a scriptural prophecy; and it is a legitimate object of Christian faith for those who do not think that this prophecy has received its fulfilment in the past, to hold that it will yet receive it in the future. Here again it is important to observe, that the revelation of the Man of Sin is linked with the final and

[1] *Bib. Theol. N.T.*, i. 305. Weiss and Bousset both maintain with great ability the Jewish origin of Antichrist. On the other hand, Baur, Hilgenfeld, Döllinger, Holtzmann, Schmiedel, Jülicher, and Sabatier, look rather to a Gentile origin. Cf. Charles, *Eschatology*, p. 381 n.

[2] On the wonders expected to be wrought by Antichrist, cf. Charles, *Ascension*, pp. 26–27, and Bousset, ch. xii.

[3] On the whole subject the literature is voluminous, but cf. especially Bousset, *Antichrist Legend*, and his article on "Antichrist" in *Ency. Biblica;* Weiss, *Biblical Theology of N.T.*, i. 305–311; Beyschlag, *N.T. Theology*, ii. 256–258; Spitta, *Urchristentum*, i. 134 sqq.; Kabisch, *Die Eschatologie des Paulus;* Charles, *Ascension of Isaiah*, Introd. li–lxxiii; Jowett, *Thessalonians*, i. 86 sqq.; Schmiedel, *H.-Comm.*, pp. 38 sqq.; P. Fairbairn, *Prophecy*, pp. 360 sqq.; Eadie, in *Thessalonians;* S. Davidson, in *Ency. Britannica;* Askwith, *Introd. to the Thessalonian Epistles*, ch. v.; H. St. John Thackeray, *Paul's Relation to Contemporary Jewish Thought*, pp. 136–141.

personal Advent of Christ. This at once sweeps away a whole host of intermediate and wholly inadequate, and sometimes grossly unhistorical and uncharitable, interpretations. If the experience of centuries has shown us that Paul's expectation of the one Advent has had to be projected into the distant future, so must it be with the other. When they come they will come together. If the one had already been revealed, so would the other. It is a dark and appalling figure that the Apostle casts upon the canvas, but it is one that the eyes of men have not yet in reality seen.

And yet we may say it is not an impossible, perhaps not even an extravagant, anticipation. There have been some, during these eighteen centuries of human story, even among popes and emperors, who have exhibited in hideous depravity now one and now another of those features which the Apostle describes. History has shown us men in high places, whose coming has been after the working of Satan, who have deceived others with signs and lying wonders, and led them astray from the truth; we have known some who were almost ready in their insane pride to exact a homage and reverence that could only be rendered to God Himself; and we cannot think it altogether extravagant to anticipate, that there should at some time be a gathering up of all these evil qualities into one, a supreme Satanic effort on the earth, a Man, no less than fiend incarnate, who shall set himself up against the Almighty, the true Antichrist, of whom there have been many imperfect types, and whom the glorious appearing of the Lord from heaven shall overwhelm. Even now—to extend Paul's saying—we may see this mystery of iniquity at work in every sin and crime wrought among men, in every falling away from the faith, in every oppression or outburst of lawlessness and terror,—in all evils that are only restrained from coming to a head of irresistible anarchy by the good sense, the good government, and all the still potent forces of moral and social order in the Christian world. It may be that the dark culmination of evil here prefigured, is the state which our Lord Himself pointed to when He said: "When the Son

of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" as if He meant to warn us that the antagonism of sin would increase, that it would not, even in His own bitter experience, exhaust its strength. In the fulness of time, when it covered the world with its baneful shadow, He at His Coming would find it so, and finding it would destroy it, as only He can, "with the breath of His mouth."

It may indeed seem strange that if Christianity, in its onward history, is to extend in influence over the world, there should be such an intensification of the power of apostasy at the last. The natural thought is that by that time the true religion, having already overcome the inner principle of evil, should rather find its foe increasingly enfeebled and ready to perish. Dorner, we believe, points to the true explanation of this when he says:

"Since the process of Christian grace is and remains ethical in character, *i.e.* since it is conditioned by human freedom, it follows directly from the growing influence of Christianity in the world, that those who nevertheless persevere in resistance, will be impelled and hardened by the stronger revelation of Christ, to more and more malignant, especially to more spiritual, forms of wickedness, in order to hold their ground against it. In this way, then, the apostasy, supported by lying and the semblance of spiritual being, is the more seductive and contagious, and thereto even outward apostasy in further extension may attach itself, in further development and revelation of the inner state. But the transition to this is formed by the inner apostasy through falsification of Christianity, which when it assumes a spiritual garb is capable of the greatest diffusion. Other religions of a higher class look for extension by simple growth, and at least uniform victory in the main. Christianity shows such confidence in its truth and victorious strength, that it predicts a great apostasy in relation to the very time when its influence on humanity has become greatest, while conscious also of being a match for the apostasy. Certain of its indestructibleness, from the first it reckoned on this fact. Momentary overthrow it will convert into the foil of its all the more glorious triumph."[1]

[1] *System of Christian Doctrine*, iv. 397–398.

## II.

But there were other efforts made by Paul to counteract the unseemly and perilous restlessness that had arisen in Thessalonica over the Second Coming. He not only pointed out that many things must first take place before that divine event, he earnestly exhorted that it is needful to give a more diligent attention to the common duties of life. He had done so in the First Epistle. He does so now even more earnestly, and perhaps we may say more sternly.

Paul evidently believes, in spite of all the trials that have come upon them, and all the agitation that has taken place, that the hearts of most of the converts in Thessalonica are sound. He affirms his confidence that the majority of them are really true to the gospel he has delivered, and that they will loyally strive to carry out its ideals. But those who have seriously yielded themselves to evil influences and erroneous views, though they be only a minority, are yet a very troublesome and dangerous element. It is in their power to imperil the peace of the Church, that essential treasure on which its progress and very life depend. Hence the Apostle cannot speak of the situation but as one of the utmost gravity. He makes the most solemn appeals, and he even points to the necessity of severe steps of discipline in dealing with it.

He describes the converts who disappoint him as those who walk "disorderly." They are not charged with moral iniquity, nor have they fallen away from faith in the gospel, but they jar and disturb the harmony of the common life. They have got out of step with the steady onward march of their brethren. The word Paul uses enshrines a military metaphor. It suggests that they are like undisciplined troops, who really may cause more havoc in the army than the foe himself. The root of it all, no doubt, is the misguided opinion which has already been corrected. The practical fruits, however, are idleness, and all the mischief which idleness ever finds at its hand.

Men are giving up working at their business, and what are they doing? They are going about interfering with the business of their neighbours. Not working, they yet work too much. Not busy, they are busybodies. Their idle tattle, their gossip, their prying and talebearing, cause endless annoyance. They are the enemies of charity and concord, just as serious a thing as to be the enemies of faith. Moreover, earning nothing for themselves they necessarily are a burden on the earnings of others. This appears to have been carried beyond the verge of endurance. They took advantage of the acknowledged claims of Christian brotherhood, and exploited the Church. They put nothing in, but took everything out. It seemed good to belong to a society whose fundamental principles were that the strong should help the weak, and that they who had should give to them who had not. The Church of Thessalonica was not pledged to a state of communism, but the disorderly evidently acted as if it were, and as if it never occurred to them that their selfish claims upon its generosity could be too far or too insolently pushed. They had to learn that the Christian conscience has also another view, that it is a sin to give when giving only ministers to evil.

Hence Paul earnestly commands and exhorts, even "by our Lord Jesus Christ," those brethren who are behaving so ignobly, to work, to work quietly, and to eat their own and not another's bread. He reminds them of his example when he was among them, how he toiled night and day at his task, not being chargeable to any of them, "not because he had not power," but because he wished to give them the pattern of a diligent and independent life. He even reminds them of the maxim that had been so often on his lips, that "if any would not work, neither should he eat."

Here, undoubtedly, we have sound Christian teaching on the subject of labour. In the first place, this exhortation of the Apostle represents labour as a social necessity. The whole framework of society depends upon it, and the life of the man, of the family, and of the nation, demands it.

Every man is expected to do his part. If health be given him, and if work be at hand, he is inexcusable if he remain in the ranks of the unemployed. It is a crime to be a mere idler. Idle rich and idle poor alike exist on sufferance, and social parasites, hangers-on, and men who prey and batten on the fruits of other men's toil, have really no title to live. Paul went that length. Starvation, he thought, should be allowed to work itself out as the consequence of incorrigible idleness.

Further, it was his opinion that labour was an excellent safeguard of Christian morals. He would find in a steady application to the duties of life the true antidote to spiritual restlessness and fanaticism. No doubt he was right. Occupation is one of the first essentials of a good life. A wise man will never have any desire to shirk his work, but a consuming desire to stand to it and fulfil it. It is not a perfectly common view. Some cynic has said that life would be very tolerable but for its pleasures. It is a more popular impression that it would be very tolerable if it were not so full of labour. The ideal of many hearts is to escape work, and to be above it; as if one could ever be above that which "lifts its summit into the very heavens." The common belief is that to become a man of leisure is the only way to extract the good of life. There never was a profounder mistake. It is the men of leisure who are the most bored, and the men of pleasure who become blasé. Work, even hard work, of some honourable kind, is a man's salvation. Along that line God sends peace and joy, purity and strength. Some may have too much of it; the burdens of the world may not seem well adjusted. And yet to have none at all would be a greater evil than to have too much. The devil enters by the door of idleness, and the heart that is "empty, swept, and garnished," is his surest dwelling-place. There he finds the best soil for the tares of morbid habits and ruinous vices. No sounder doctrine was ever preached than that the man whose hours are full of toil is the man who lives the safest life.

Not only so, all honest labour, however humble, is a

means of grace. It is an imitation of God Himself, and brings a man nearer to heaven. Any discontent with the work that lies to our hand is never inspired by a true seeking after God. It is the surest way of turning from Him. A manuscript recently discovered in Egypt, and probably dating back to the close of the second century, has preserved some traditionary "Logia" or sayings of Jesus. Among them is the striking one: "Raise the stone, and there thou shalt find Me; cleave the wood, and there am I." If that be a true utterance of Jesus, we may interpret it as illustrating the principle of which we speak. To hew stones is a humble enough task, and yet Christ may be found there. To cleave the wood is no lofty calling, and yet the spirit of the Master Himself may be revealed at every stroke.

It is a gracious lesson for us to learn that God has, as Carlyle said, "wrapped the Ideal for us in the Actual"; that we do not need to cry to Him for another kingdom, because He has put the key of the kingdom of heaven into our hands now, if we would see it. It lies in the daily duty we think so little of, and in the common task we are so prone to despise. A man might discover it in his business, a woman in her home. That which is near, not that which is remote, is what God means us to do. There it is possible for us also to "manifest the works of our Father."

But it is one thing for the Apostle to lay down a noble and helpful doctrine, it is another thing to find it heartily accepted. Paul conceives a case in which it is not obeyed. He supposes that there may be a man with whom such pleading and remonstrance are in vain. The disorderly may despise authority, and refuse to be controlled. What then? Is there no remedy? There assuredly is, and that within the power of the Church herself. Such a man may be noted, and the believers may decline to have fellowship with him.

This is a very significant utterance. It is the first mention of discipline within the Church. And it is significant because it so simply takes for granted the

autonomy of the Church, her inherent right to regulate her own membership, and to decide what shall be the terms of her communion. Paul never dreams that the right can be questioned. Nor can it, except by a claim for unlimited individual liberty. To join a society, and participate in its benefits, necessarily implies a counterbalancing restriction in submitting to its laws. It is impossible to be a member of any community, whether sacred or civil, without some certain curtailment of personal freedom. "A person who claims to belong to the Church," it has been said, "and yet resents the bearing of the general Church feeling upon his way of life, is really asserting the unmodified separateness of each individual soul; a position which is hard to sustain even in political theory, and is not consistent with a complete adhesion to the New Testament, or with the principles which emerge throughout Church history. It is only by this isolation of each individual that the right and the obligation of the Church to enforce discipline upon its members can be validly set aside." [1]

But, it may be asked, what of a case of error in a decision? Suppose a man feels aggrieved by the action taken against him by those who are in authority in the Church or congregation to which he belongs. Suppose he believes the decision has been come to with imperfect knowledge, or by wrong methods, or even under the influence of unworthy motives. In most of the organised branches of the Christian Church he has carefully safeguarded interests, and a right of appeal to higher tribunals. In the divided state of Christendom he may even perhaps seek in one ecclesiastical denomination a refuge which is denied to him in another. Relief has sometimes been thus enjoyed. Instead of enduring bitter persecution, a man may happily find himself in a new atmosphere of sympathy and respect. It is one of the possible compensations for the many evils attending the sectional condition into which the Church has fallen. And yet it must be said that this

[1] Strong, *Christian Ethics*, p. 364.

may itself be turned into a great evil, a deep aggravation of the "sin of schism," if it be used merely as an escape from discipline, and if its tendency be to promote laxity in any body of Christians who are tempted to grow, at least numerically, at the expense of their neighbours. But failing, even within the bounds of the section of the Church to which he belongs, to obtain what he believes to be justice, a man may still appeal to the Christian conscience and judgment of mankind. Great hearts have been righted there when none of the "rulers" have shown them a single ray of grace. Yea, even beyond all fallible human scenes, a good man may lift his eyes to another tribunal, to a great and holy Judgment Seat, where no error is made, and where the Eternal Lord Himself is Judge. In the historic square of Florence, in front of the Old Palace, when Savonarola was being unfrocked before being committed to the flames, the Bishop of Vasona said, "Thus do I separate thee from the Church militant and triumphant." For a moment the old light gleamed in the martyr's eyes as he replied, "From the Church militant, yes. From the Church triumphant, no; it is not thine." Like Stephen, he also beheld the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.

It is no doubt easy to understand how, in the beginning of Christianity, when the Church merely existed in the form of a series of small voluntary societies, dotted here and there through the great cities of the Empire, her right of self-regulation should seem clear. Things, however, have appeared to some more complicated and confused as her history rolled on, and as she assumed a powerful place in human society. For then her membership naturally conferred on a man a certain status, which carried with it interests not merely spiritual but material. In that case, to deprive him of Church fellowship would also be to affect and injure these material interests. But even in such a case there can be no just complaint against the Church for disturbing interests which she herself has created, and for exercising her simple right of exclusion within her own province. Risk of such loss must be taken

by her adherents.[1] Many receive material blessing through the mere establishment of Christianity in the community, who never aid in its maintenance, or even give it countenance. Such gain is accepted without acknowledgment; there may sometimes be cases when the loss must be incurred without complaint. These really are the accidents of the position. They depend very much on the mere popularity of the Church. If she be held in esteem, undoubtedly a man will lose by the exercise of discipline against him; but if she be unpopular, herself in disrepute, such a matter would be of little external consequence to him, certainly no injury. In any case, such considerations cannot overthrow the native right of such an institution to declare who are and who are not fit to be within her pale, or to exercise her spiritual offices. The claim is not put too strongly when it is said: "The Church in its own affairs remains the only rightful and the highest court of appeal on earth, and any outward judicial authority which would display itself in it, or has done so, in order to rule over it, and hold it in tutelage, is false, illegal, and condemned by Christ in advance." [2]

One underlying motive, therefore, of Church discipline is obviously self-preservation. No organised body could long exist without the power of dealing with what transgressed its ideals, or irritated and threatened its life. "Neglecting discipline, it would necessarily come to a stand, implicate itself in the sins of its unworthy members, give free scope to the poison in its own organism, and thus procure its own dissolution." [3]

But Paul indicates also another motive, one that has respect to the offender. Discipline does not spring from any wish to inflict punishment upon him, but from a pure

[1] Of course this does not deny the obvious power that the State in its province has over all its citizens, so that, if one should injure another, the aggrieved may appeal to that power. The civil authority deals with the matter simply as a civil question, judging whether the civil law has been transgressed or not.

[2] Beyschlag, *N.T. Theology*, i. 171.

[3] Schaff, *History of the Apostolic Church*, ii. bk. ii. ch. ii. sec. 122.

desire to secure a change in his mind and life. It seeks his return to the better way which the Church believes he has forsaken. The State may sometimes inflict its penalty, and exhibit no concern whether its action may lead to the sinner's amendment or not. The Church never can, never dare. Her love is not extinguished because she withstands a brother; it rather takes a fresh start, and regards him with a new concern. She cannot be fully satisfied until she sees him again in full accord with what she devoutly believes to be the will of Christ. The resistance with which she has met him, has been painful to her as to him, perhaps most of all to her. If she has proceeded in the spirit of the gospel, she has proceeded reluctantly, patiently, with all tenderness, and with all charity; yea more, with deep humility and meekness, remembering her own unworthiness. Like God Himself, she cannot love the death of the sinner, but rather that he would turn from his evil way and live. Ten thousand times rather would she be reconciled than admonish, receive than rebuke, restore than suspend. Deep in her heart is the spirit of redeeming love, the yearning to be at one.

## III.

Finally, the Epistle shows us how, in all his anxiety and warnings, the Apostle himself never ceased to display this noble spirit. In his eager desire to set at rest the disturbed life of his converts, and to uphold them in their manifold trials, he did not neglect to use the highest means of all. Again and again he bore them to God's Throne in prayer. Mightier than any power he could put forth was the grace divine. He believes in it, and knows its potency. Hence his longing that the Lord Himself, who can move and control the hearts of all men, who can turn their stormy passions into calm, and the night of their darkness into the clear light of truth, would direct his brethren into "the love of God and the patience of Christ."

Beautiful prayers close each of the chapters, and they

are very touching when we remember the lives of those in whose interest they were so fervently breathed. Many foes raged against them, and many defections disturbed them. These gave pathetic point to the supplications that God would count them worthy of their calling, and fulfil the work of faith with power, that the name of the Lord Jesus might be glorified in them; that the Lord Jesus Himself, and God their Father, who had loved them, and given them everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, would comfort their hearts, and stablish them in every good word and work; and finally, that the Lord of peace Himself would give them peace always, by all means.

After all, these were the things those Christians needed most, and we could not conceive Paul failing to seek them at the only source from which they could come. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." It instils sweetness into many a bitter cup, and opens the door of mercy to many laden souls. Yet it entertains no quixotic task of changing the divine will, or childish presumption of informing or directing the infinite wisdom. It rests in a far deeper philosophy. "The whole confidence and glory of prayer," says Ruskin, "is in its appeal to a Father who knows our necessities before we ask, who knows our thoughts before they rise in our hearts, and whose decrees, as unalterable in the eternal future as in the eternal past, yet in the close verity of visible fact, bend, like reeds, before the foreordained prayers of His children."[1]

Lastly, these prayers not only inspire us to pray "both for ourselves and those who call us friend," but appeal to us also by the high things which the Apostle ventured to ask, the noble ideals he believed to be attainable by those lowly converts freshly drawn from the darkness of the pagan world. There was nothing pure or lofty in life to which he did not call them, to which he did not believe but that God in His mercy meant to bring them. If for them such

[1] *On the Old Road*, ii. 376, § 286.

ideals were possible, surely also for us. It is a high calling to be citizens of the heavenly kingdom. We forget it too often. Amid the din and turmoil of our earthly life, amid its absorbing cares and toils, the glory and the freshness of the dream fade into the grey light of common day. The Apostle turns the heart again to God who is its home. To listen to his clear notes is like having the face fanned by a fresh breeze; he suffuses life with the glow of a holy purpose, and speeds it to its goal with a deathless hope.

# II.

# THE FOUR GREAT EPISTLES.

GALATIANS.

1 CORINTHIANS.

2 CORINTHIANS.

ROMANS.

Attacked almost simultaneously at every point of his work, Paul does not shrink from the contest; he redoubles his energies, and makes himself almost ubiquitous, everywhere confronting his adversaries and never for one moment doubting of victory. For four or five years this great controversy absorbed his whole thought and energy; it was the leading fact which dominated and distinguished this second period. Our great Epistles are the issue of these truly tragic circumstances, and can only be thoroughly understood in their light. These Epistles are not theological treatises, so much as pamphlets; they are the crushing and terrible blows with which the mighty combatant openly answered the covert intrigues of his enemies. The contest is in reality a drama, which grows larger and more complicated as it advances from Galatia to Rome.—**Sabatier.**

# THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

## I.

## THE DUTCH SCHOOL AND THE FOUR GREAT EPISTLES.

The two Epistles to the Thessalonians stand in a group by themselves as the earliest of Paul's writings that have come down to us. But after a few years' interval there follows a series of four Epistles, the most remarkable of all the utterances of the Apostle.

These are Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans, a group which is usually distinguished as the four great or principal Epistles. This distinction is given them because of their intrinsic worth, and also because of the highly favourable opinion which critics of almost all schools have held regarding their authenticity. Every earnest student perceives the immense importance of the fact that at least one portion of the field consists of writings which, by almost common consent, are genuine writings of the Apostle. If Paul wrote them, they take us right back to a period of about twenty-five years from the Crucifixion. He is then far advanced on his career as a missionary, and there can be no dubiety as to his essential standpoint and teaching. He sets down with great fulness and distinctness the doctrines of grace, and the way of salvation as the Church from the first declared it. Such writings, therefore, are to be regarded as of inestimable

value, the strongest and surest defence of historical Christianity.

It is well known that the early date of the writings is strongly attested by Christian writers of the sub-apostolic age, and that for eighteen centuries the tradition has been unbroken, that in these pages we have the very mind and heart of the Apostle. It will suffice to say that the Tübingen school, which doubted or denied the authenticity of all the rest of the Epistles, frankly acknowledged the genuineness of these. This also became the general verdict of the 'critical' school which followed that of Tübingen, and which, in many branches, has included the names of the leading German scholars to this day. Baur's language was: "There has never been the slightest suspicion of unauthenticity cast on these four Epistles, and they bear so incontestably the character of Pauline originality, that there is no conceivable ground for the assertion of critical doubts in their case."[1] Renan said: "They are incontestable, and uncontested."[2] And Professor Ramsay writes recently of them as "the unimpeached and unassailable nucleus of admitted Pauline writings."[3] We may presume that these opinions were based on some critical examination of the writings, and that they were well weighed before they were uttered. The last thing in the world we should think of, would be that such judgments were dictated by a slavish deference to tradition, or that, through some strange shyness and constraint, the men who delivered them feared to utter the truth which they must have perceived. Nevertheless, so grave a charge is now confidently made against them. It did not seem to us conspicuously obvious that such writers, or their followers in such opinions, were "unfaithful to their principles respected everywhere else"; that they would not in this case "take serious account of objections," that "hearing they would not hear, and seeing they would not see"; that, in short, these four Epistles

[1] *Paul*, i. 246.
[2] *St. Paul*, Introduction, p. v.
[3] Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*, i. 484b

had exercised over them an amazing and unaccountable glamour, which straightway caused them to forget what manner of men, what good comrades in critical fields of "untrammelled scientific research," they had always hitherto been. Yet hard sayings like these are now spoken of them by a new circle of critics, who have discovered that the four principal Epistles are no more genuine than the rest, that they have been all along the objects of an ignorant fetish-worship, from which the world is now happily to be delivered. It certainly becomes us to listen to the new voices, to learn what their message is, and how they have reached it, especially when we are aware that they are the voices of men of undoubted learning and sincerity.[1]

The genealogical line of objection to the genuineness of the Epistles is not a very long one, and may soon be traced. It began with Edward Evanson, a retired English clergyman, who published in 1792 his "Dissonance of the Four generally received Evangelists," in the course of which he maintained that he could not regard an Epistle to a Church in Rome as historically possible in Paul's time, for the simple reason that, according to Acts, no such Church was then in existence; he also thought there

[1] Our acquaintance with the Dutch school has been largely derived from the able chapters on "Recent attacks on the Hauptbriefe" in Knowling's *Witness of the Epistles*, from Clemen's *Die Einheitlichkeit der paulinischen Briefe*, from the references in Sanday and Headlam's Introduction to their Commentary on *Romans*, those of Godet, Jülicher, and Zahn in their Introductions, of Schmiedel and Lipsius in the *Hand-Commentar*, and other passages in English and German, more or less informing; but above all from a series of three interesting articles by Van Manen himself—who, as Cheyne declares, might without immodesty say of the whole discussions, *Quorum pars magna fui*—in the *Expository Times*, ix. 205, 257, 314; and, still more recently, from his frank and lucid exposition of the "main contentions" of the later criticism, in the portions contributed by him to the article on Paul in the *Ency. Biblica*, vol. iii. Van Manen would doubtless not regard this as quite sufficient ground for judgment. He appears anxious that all the writings of the school should be studied, down, we suppose, to every "i" they have dotted, and every "t" they have crossed. But his own articles present matters with admirable clearness, and even, we feel, with adequate fulness. They enable us to form a definite opinion regarding at least the main positions.

were passages in the Epistle which referred to a period after the Fall of Jerusalem, and which consequently could not have been written by a man who died a considerable time before that event. This book was re-issued in 1805, and was answered by Falconer in his Bampton Lecture, 1810. The next writer to herald the dawn of the newer criticism was Bruno Bauer (1809–1882). Bauer professed to carry the work of Strauss to its logical issue. He represented the Gospels as unhistorical, the mere dramatic products of the human consciousness. Mark was the original author of the romance, which the other evangelists only added to and embellished. The simplest statements of facts are supposed by Bauer to have been concocted with dogmatic aims, intended to exploit a credulous and superstitious people. On the Pauline Epistles he wrote a series of three critical pamphlets (1850–1–2), in which the four principal Epistles are summarily relegated to the close of the second century. Bauer lost his professorship at Bonn for his opinions, and, regarding himself as a martyr, launched into a bitter Ishmaelite career in the literature of theology and politics, in which he displayed the most inordinate vanity and venom. As to theology, " he denies its scientific value; he hates it with an unutterable rage; he outrages it, and persecutes it with the inverted fanaticism of the old Theologian."[1] Even those who largely agree with his results, speak of him as the " most rash " of all critics of the Bible. Yet he is generally regarded as the man who gave the real impulse to those new views, whose more reputable advocates began rapidly and vigorously to make themselves heard, chiefly in Holland, from the eighties onwards.

There Pierson and Naber in 1886 published their opinion, that coincident with the appearance of Christianity there was a revival of spiritual Judaism in the form of an anti-Pharisaic party, one of whose most distinguished members was the real originator of the spiritual ideas we are familiar with in the Pauline Epistles; but, that the

[1] Lichtenberger, *German Theol. of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 376.

actual author of these Epistles was a Christian ecclesiastic of the second century, a certain Paulus Episcopus, of whom nothing else is known, who filched the ideas of the nameless but spiritually-minded Jew, and arrayed them in the form of these fictitious letters, only interpolating here and there some timid and apologetic portions of his own. Paul the Apostle was an historical reality, but hazy and uncertain, nothing like the man we are supposed to know in the Acts and Epistles, although his namesake, the Bishop, thought it worth while to personate him, while the Churches which he addressed in this guise, accepted everything in verity. Dr. Loman, however, about the same time (1882–1886), endeavoured to put the criticism on a more scientific basis. According to him, Paul, as we think we know him, was in the main a legendary character, and even Jesus Himself never really existed, but was an ideal name, used only as the symbol and personification of spiritual thoughts and principles which came into vogue in the second century. The Epistles were written in the first quarter of that century, and as Paul was believed to be a reformer of anti-Judaic sympathies, he was chosen as the patron of the movement, and the writings were published in his name. The aim of this whole series of pseudepigrapha, was to further the interests of this circle of clever and elevated men, who, partly imbued with Hebrew ideals, and partly with the speculations of Greek and Alexandrian philosophy, desired the spread of a universalistic Christianity and true Gnosis. For this end they perceived it necessary that Jewish legalism should be neutralised, and that the narrow national element should be expelled from the Messianic idea. Hence the Epistles. This, it may be said, remains the accepted hypothesis of the origin of all the Pauline writings, although most of the later writers expressly decline to commit themselves to Loman's theory respecting the gospel history. Following Loman, come especially Steck of Bern, Völter of Amsterdam, Van Manen of Leyden. It is unnecessary to go into details regarding the ingenious dissections and theories of interpolation, in which some of the writers of the

school have been bewilderingly prolific.[1] It will be sufficient to indicate what are described as the main contentions.

The aim of the newer critics is professedly to complete the work that Baur of Tübingen and his followers left unfinished; to do for these Epistles what had already been accomplished for the others. The reason why Baur stopped where he did, is a puzzle to them. It is strange that he did not discuss the question of the genuineness of the four Epistles; if he had only done so, it is thought, he must have come to the conclusions that are now reached. At any rate it is deeply regretted that Baur simply *assumed* the authenticity, without attempting to justify it. The new school will have no assumptions, at least of this kind. All that ever was written, whether principal Epistles or minor Epistles, must come to the bar of criticism and be judged. It cannot be expected, of course, that the judgments should in every respect be identical. The writers differ in details. Nevertheless, in broad, general results they are very much at one, and it is with this consensus that we are chiefly concerned.

In the first place, to think of Paul is to think of the book of Acts. But this book "cannot be regarded" as a "true and credible first-hand narrative of what actually occurred." It is in character partly "legendary-historical," and partly "edifying and apologetical." As a work it is a substantial unity, but based evidently on older authorities, the chief of which are designated (1) Acts of Paul or *Periodoi Paulou*, and (2) Acts of Peter or *Periodoi*

[1] Cf. the painstaking collection of this mass of conjectural criticism in Clemen's *Einheitlichkeit*, a task which Van Manen speaks of as performed with "talent to a considerable extent, but not faultlessly." He means that we must read all the books referred to, or our impression will be incomplete. On the integrity of the Galatian Epistle Ramsay is characteristically emphatic. "And this letter is pronounced by some of our friends in Europe to be an accretion of scraps round and between bits of genuine original Pauline writing. How blind and dead to all sense of literature and to all knowledge of life and human nature must the man be who so judges—a mere pedant confined within the narrow walls and the close atmosphere of a schoolroom and a study!" (*Hist. Comm.* pp. 474–475).

*Petrou.* These, with oral tradition, and a few borrowed details (say, from Josephus) make up the sources. The author has kept well to his authorities, and yet at the same time he has woven them together in quite a free way of his own. His name is not known, but he took the name of Luke, Paul's companion, and, having his home perhaps in Rome, perhaps in Asia Minor, he flourished about the second quarter of the second century. This book informs us "how the Christianity of the first thirty or thirty-five years after the Crucifixion was spoken about, estimated, and taught, in influential circles, about the years 130–150 A.D."

As for the canonical Epistles, all of them, without exception, are pseudepigrapha. As a group they are distinguished by an obvious unity, not by any means unity of authorship, but as having originated "in one circle, at one time, in one environment." As to this origin, external evidence tells us nothing; such evidence never in any case can testify to much more than existence at a certain time; but internal evidence, the only positive evidence, points strongly to the conclusion that the Epistles are not the work of Paul. Whose then? The circle or environment to which they owe their origin, had its home somewhere outside Palestine, "probably in Syria, particularly in Antioch; yet it may have been in Asia Minor"; and was composed of certain "heretical" disciples who, as "friends of Gnosis, of speculation, and of mysticism," had ceased "to regard themselves as bound by tradition, and felt themselves free to extend their flight in every direction." This is the true home of Paulinism. With the historical Paul, Paulinism has really nothing to do. It is altogether "the later development of a school of progressive believers who named themselves after Paul, and placed themselves as it were under his ægis." The Epistles, one after another, are only a series of reflections of this movement from different points of view. Is there really, then, any historical Paul? It is not, on this theory, a question of very great moment. Opinions vary. Steck still recognises a really "human and beautiful" Paul in the Acts. To Van Manen this is too

conservative. It is not denied that there was an early disciple named Paul, but he is a very indistinct personality, an itinerant artisan-preacher, who "with reasonable certainty" made one journey towards the end of his life, Troas-Philippi-Troas-Jerusalem-Rome (Acts xvi. 10–17, xx. 5–15, xxi. 1–18, xxvii. 1–xxviii. 16), though why there should be this concession is not quite clear. We must not, however, think too much of it, for even in this journey-narrative he comes before us "now enveloped in clouds, now standing out in clear light; now a man among men, and now an ideal figure who is admired but not understood." Although the representation is in the main from the life, the reader is "at every point conscious of inaccuracy and exaggeration, and finds himself compelled to withhold his assent where he comes across what is manifestly legendary." This legendary element is easily recognised: it includes everything that borders on the supernatural, from the story of the conversion onwards.[1] Regarding his ideas, "it does not appear" that Paul was in any way greatly in advance of his fellow-disciples; he was no more emancipated from Judaism than they were, and had no thought of any breach with it. He remained to the last in his own consciousness a Jew, with this sole distinction from the children of Abraham, that he preached "the things concerning Jesus." For all the rest, "legend has made itself master of his person."

Such, then, is the message of the new teachers, to which they so earnestly summon us to listen. It is the result of what they consider "conceivable," what they think may rationally be "supposed."

If we inquire more particularly what are the reasons why the four principal Epistles are judged unauthentic, we have them clearly and succinctly stated by Van Manen in seven points. In order to understand him we must make a brief note of these. If we can accept them, they are the stepping-stones into the realm of the newer light.

[1] Cf. *Ency. Biblica*, iii. col. 3633, for a partial list of this huge body of "legendary" matter.

1. In respect of *form*, the writings are not letters, but, strictly speaking, epistles, books or treatises set forth in the form of letters. They are intended particularly as documents of edification to be read at religious meetings; and though the names of Paul and his associates are used to gain a tone of authority, and the object is to make it appear as if they were alive at the time of composition, these personages had in point of fact long passed away.

2. The other six points concern the *substance* or contents, the Paulinism of the Epistles.

(1) If the Epistles are genuine, it is impossible for us to form "any intelligible conception" of Paul's relation to the three Churches concerned; or even of the schools and parties that are referred to. Since we cannot form such an intelligible conception, the inference is that the Epistles cannot be genuine.

(2) The Epistles contain doctrinal and ethical ideas of such magnitude and depth as were not possible to Paul within a few [twenty-five] years after the Crucifixion.

(3) In these Epistles there is a substratum of inherited doctrine, or older Paulinism, long familiar to the supposed readers; but some, especially in Corinth, have got beyond this stage; while others, the Judaisers of Galatians, have actually gone back from it to the still older Jewish or Jewish-Christian view. These groups "one can hardly imagine" existing in such force in Paul's time.

(4) What is the Paulinism expounded and defended in these Epistles? It is "the fruit of a thorough-going reformation of the older form of Christianity." It manifestly could not be reached until the "original expectations of the first disciples" had been altogether or in part given up. Time, no little time, is needed.

(5) There are problems in the Epistles, which we can "see" do not belong to a period so early as twenty or thirty years after the Crucifixion. Such are: problems of the relation of Law and Gospel, of justification, of election, of Christ according to the flesh and according to the Spirit, of the value of circumcision, the Sabbath, visions, marriage, the authority of the Apostles, and a multitude of others.

We must not be deceived. Although Paul is represented as speaking, "the tone is everywhere retrospective."

(6) A special kind of Christian Gnosis occupies many of the highly-developed minds; Israel's rejection is spoken of in a way that could not possibly have preceded the Fall of Jerusalem; moreover, we are in the presence of bloody persecutions. Further, we have the Church 'rich,' many of its members 'perfect,' 'spiritual,' full of 'understanding,' capable of following profound discussions. There are 'traditions' also; the fixed customs and usages of organisation, collections, ordinations. In short, time has rolled on, and the historical background of the Epistles is that of a later age.

We are grateful to Van Manen for such a lucid presentation of these arguments. We long wished to know where the Dutch critics were, and how they got there. Yet almost every one of these arguments has in principle been familiar in connection with the later Epistles. The sounds are old; the application alone is comparatively new. And in fact, when we consider them, these last six points really resolve themselves into two: the first, and the five others. (1) In the first place, this: There are relations in the Epistles so difficult to understand that, since we cannot properly understand them, the Epistles are not trustworthy. (2) In the next place, the development, religiously and ecclesiastically, is so great that not merely twenty or thirty years, but seventy or eighty more are required, if we are to be able rationally to conceive it; to accept the situation at any earlier date is simply to accept what cannot possibly have been. We trust this does not reduce the "main contentions" to too naked a condition, for it is good to get to first principles. But if this really be the *materia prima* of the newer critics, need they be so indignant that the world has not gone in a blaze? We shall state a few reasons why, to us at least, the whole theory seems impossible of acceptance.

1. We cannot share in the objection to the *form* of the four Epistles. They profess to be letters, but we are told they are obviously treatises in an epistolary form. The

critics are certainly entitled to this opinion. It is a question of literary taste. It ought, however, to go for something, that nearly every one else regards them as bearing abundant and beautiful marks of being true letters. To our eyes it is as clear as day in the case of Galatians and the two to Corinthians, and not very obscure even in the case of Romans. But we will cite (we hope not at unpardonable length) an authority whom we know Van Manen will receive with every respect. In the course of his articles in the *Expository Times* (ix. 210), the Dutch Professor speaks of that part of Deissmann's *Bible Studies* where the distinction between letters and epistles is so ably drawn, as, in his regard, "perfect." It is very interesting, therefore, to see what Deissmann has to say of this distinction when applied to the four principal Epistles. Van Manen will not have failed to remark Deissmann's insistence that the two categories, "doctrinal letter" and "epistle," must not be amalgamated. Deissmann says that he "has no objection to any one breaking up the Pauline letters into several subdivisions, and subsuming some of them under the species *doctrinal letter;* only one should not fondly imagine that by means of the *doctrinal letter* he has bridged over the great gulf between letter and epistle. The pre-literary character even of the doctrinal letter must be maintained." He has been speaking of Philippians. But he goes on to say that this holds good even of the "great Epistles."

"They, too, are partly doctrinal; they contain, in fact, theological discussions: but even in these the Apostle has no desire to make literature. The *Letter to the Galatians* is not a pamphlet 'upon the relation of Christianity to Judaism,' but a message sent in order to bring back the foolish Galatians to their senses. The letter can only be understood in the light of its special purpose as such. How much more distinctly do the *Letters to the Corinthians* bear the stamp of the true letter! The second of them, in particular, reveals its true character in every line; in the author's opinion, it is the most letter-like of all the letters of Paul, though that to Philemon may appear on the surface to have a better claim to that position. The great difficulty

in the understanding of it is due to the very fact that it is so truly a letter, so full of allusions and familiar references, so pervaded with irony and with a depression which struggles against itself—matters of which only the writer and the readers of it understood the purport, but which we, for the most part, can ascertain only approximately. What is doctrinal in it is not there for its own sake, but is altogether subservient to the purpose of the letter. . . . The *Letter to the Romans* is also a real letter. No doubt there are sections in it which might also stand in an epistle; the whole tone of it, generally speaking, stamps it as different from the other Pauline letters. But nevertheless it is not a book, and the favourite saying that it is a compendium of Paulinism, that the Apostle has, in it, laid down his Dogmatics and his Ethics, certainly manifests an extreme lack of taste. No doubt Paul wished to give instruction, and he did it, in part, with the help of contemporary theology, but he does not think of the literary public of his time, or of Christians in general, as his readers; he appeals to a little company of men, whose very existence, one may say, was unknown to the public at large, and who occupied a special position within Christianity. . . . The fact that the Letter to the Romans is not so enlivened by personal references as the other letters of Paul is explained by the conditions under which it was written; he was addressing a Church which he did not yet personally know. Considered in the light of this fact, the infrequence of personal references in the letter lends no support to its being taken as a literary epistle; it is but the natural result of its non-literary purpose. Moreover, Paul wrote even the 'doctrinal' portions in his heart's blood. The words ταλαίπωρος ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος are no cool rhetorical expression of an objective ethical condition, but the impressive indication of a personal ethical experience: it is not theological paragraphs which Paul is writing here, but his confessions."[1]

We need not add to these extracts by adducing the opinions of others who are also well qualified to speak on questions of form. It is enough to quote this distinguished writer, whose insight and judgment Van Manen himself recognises.

2. The new theory absolutely discards the super-

[1] *Bible Studies*, pp. 47–49.

natural, though that itself is not new. This is really at the bottom of everything. No doubt Van Manen would confess that here we are at the parting of the ways, and that he does not expect to commend himself to all his readers. At the same time he is strong on the matter of assumptions, and it is needful to insist that he himself makes the most vital assumption of all. Everything that in any degree transcends ordinary experience is taken away: removed forthwith to limbo. So far as his articles go, he simply shrugs his shoulders, like Matthew Arnold, and says, "miracles do not happen." If this be true, there is not much use discussing the genuineness of the Epistles, or of the Gospels either; most of us had better return to our boats and nets; but if it is not true, then nine-tenths of Van Manen's arguments fall to the ground. We cannot expect him to write a treatise on miracles every time he cuts up the narrative, but only wish to make clear his final criterion of *fact*. He probably knows he would have hard work to convince all scholars that his starting-point is quite philosophical. Says Principal Fairbairn: "Whether there is anything supernatural in a history is not a matter to be decided by the play of critical formulæ on a literature, nor by the study of periods or events in isolation. It belongs to the whole, and is to be determined as regards any special person by his worth for the whole and by the degree in which he is a factor of its good."[1]

3. The criticism, having dismissed the supernatural, is dominated by a rationalistic theory of development, to whose rigid lines all the records must yield. There is a small indefinite starting-point of apostolic tradition, to be recognised by its primitive and natural way of regarding Jesus, and also by its intensely Jewish characteristics. At the other end, there is the highly developed system of specifically Christian conceptions, the spiritual and speculative wisdom, and the universalistic outlook, represented by the Epistles. This evolution is due to contact with the great civilised world and its philosophers, such as Plato.

[1] *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. 308.

Philo, and Seneca. Layer by layer the mental development can be traced, and the age fixed as certainly as geologists deal with the strata of the earth. For ourselves, we cannot believe in a theory of mental evolution so exact as this, nor accept it as the touchstone of history. For one thing, the facts of the ages are not so. The greatest personalities in political history, in philosophy, in literature, and in science, with the results they have achieved, have not obviously been the product of their environment, and if they have been due to evolution, it has certainly not been an evolution so simple and straight-forward in its *modus operandi* as that which here accounts for the origin of the Christian religion. It has had its surprises, its Shakespeare from Stratford, its Napoleon from Corsica, its Lincoln from the backwoods; but there must be no surprises of any kind in the New Testament. The radical criticism, indeed, cannot admit a dominating and creative personality, such as Paul is said to have been, simply because he comes too soon. We must, in the interests of a smooth theory of things, give at least seventy or eighty years more, for thoughts like those attributed to him to blossom into fruit. Then, of course, the personality comes, because the literature is really in existence, surprisingly soon it must be confessed, but not any longer to be denied. This personality is the most distinguished of a very remarkable group, but unfortunately we do not know anything either about him or about them, and as the first quarter of the second century is otherwise a peculiarly barren period, it is perhaps better to hazard no names. When a name was ventured upon, the rude world only scoffed.

It is further to be observed that what is recognised as primitive tradition, and what is held to be future development, are not for a moment to be thought of as mingling and coinciding, as surely might be the case in a stage of transition, and under the influence of a very active and high intelligence; they must be decisively separated and distinguished. There must be a scientific process, a kind of chemical analysis, in which we resolve our materials

into their elements. In such a process of differentiation, it behoves us to be above all things carefully and punctiliously just, otherwise our conclusions will be vitiated. The Dutch scholars have no doubt striven to see with clear eyes, and to state things fairly. Nevertheless it looks as if, while they minimise the so-called primitive tradition in an arbitrary manner, they greatly exaggerate much of the development. It seems to us, for example, a gross exaggeration to make out that the Epistles are written in the interests of a universalistic Gnosis, such as was prevalent in the second century. This is to read into them far more than is present. We know what the ripe fruits of second century Gnosticism were, and they were not at all comparable to anything discovered here. The argument that has some apparent force in relation to Colossians, is very lame and halting when applied to Corinthians. The Epistles present what we may call, with Reuss, "sporadic symptoms"; but they make no approach even to an outline of philosophic systems. We are in fact in a primitive environment, whence Gnosticism itself may have derived not a few seed-thoughts, but we are not in the presence of the diffused and developed theosophies of the second century.

No one denies development, or that there is marked evidence of it in the Pauline Epistles. But we come to a radical divergence in the method of accounting for it. The Dutch critics account for it by a crushing Juggernaut process, which levels down everything until we get safely beyond the boundaries of the apostolic age. There may be a good deal of "elevation" after that; still, all natural and within reason. We believe, however, that room can be found for an account, even a rational account, of the Christian conceptions of the Epistles, within the first fifty or sixty years of the Christian era, if we allow that a period of great spiritual intensity was likely to be the result of such events as the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. We should consider this far more probable than securing a fruitful environment for them, by conjuring into vigorous life the comparatively unknown period that

succeeded, and by gratuitously furnishing it with creatures of our own imagination. Besides, we should like to continue to attribute something to the mediation of the Holy Spirit. At this point Van Manen vanishes, if indeed he did not disappear when we mentioned the Resurrection. To retain his company, all special references to the Holy Spirit must be excluded. They do not belong to the primitive tradition. When the real Paul lived, the Paul of the supposed 'Acts of Paul' document—*Periodoi Paulou*, Van Manen desires to call it—the days of the Holy Ghost had not arrived. "Nobody then knows that Holy Ghost. Nobody thinks himself guided by Him." This is ever the *impasse* to which we come. The supernatural influence is ruled out by hypothesis, and marvellous are the generalisations and the insights of the historic critic, the strenuously scientific inquirer, who will "assume" nothing. For our part, we confess we still prefer the narrative that attributes the new ideas to a known enthusiast immediately following in the wake of the great gospel history, rather than the tale of a great unknown some hundred years later.

4. The new criticism studies the Epistles in an atmosphere laden with suspicion. The documents are approached with the certain conviction that they too, like all the rest of the New Testament, will be found spurious. If Professor Van Manen imagines that he sits down to their study unprejudiced and unbiassed by previous ideas and findings, we fear he is under a delusion which deceives no one but himself. It is his boast that he is unfettered "by any traditions, dogmatic or scientific." Not by any manner of means. He too arrives on the scene, haunted by preconceptions. He complains that conservative writers have first formed their conception of Paul, and then have tested the documents by the qualities they have themselves attributed to him. If this were so, it would seem indeed to be a vicious circle; but the Professor is himself in this very illogical plight. The difference appears to be, that the one conception is traditionary, and is supported by the Acts and Epistles received as honest and trustworthy records, while the other has been arrived at by a process

of elimination and dissection, based chiefly on personal idiosyncrasies and predilections.

5. The new theory is distinguished by the facility with which it creates history to fit itself. The 'circle' from which the Epistles are supposed to spring is wholly imaginary. There is not a single historic name mentioned in connection with it. What would the critics say to this in the case of a New Testament writing? As for poor Paul the Bishop, he sadly lacks verisimilitude; he is too much even for Van Manen's gravity. We are told the date of the great new movement—it is 120–130 A.D.; and we are told that the place was probably Syria, though perhaps it may have been Asia Minor. Then further, we are informed that the counterfeit Luke flourished about the second quarter of the second century, with a home that may have been either in the East or in the West. A guarded scepticism mingles with a credulous invention. The critics, for instance, do not know the date of Clemens Romanus, or of Basilides, and such external witnesses to the canonical writings; yet they do know the date of the new St. Luke, and, looking back over eighteen centuries to an obscure period, they are able to tell, to a narrow margin, the time within which a spiritual idea could or could not have been begotten in the human mind. According to the Dutch school, Christianity enshrines noble ideals, great spiritual truths, and has a message to mankind of the very highest importance; yet they prefer to search the earth for some imaginary birth-place for this lofty spiritual religion, rather than grant it the origin that all the Christian ages attribute to it. If their fundamental principles compel them to such shifts and speculations, there is a strong *a priori* presumption that these principles themselves need a thorough re-examination.

We should like to add to this a word on the supposed romancing of the Epistles.

In the fascinating art of making history the pseudepigraphist of the second century is *facile princeps*. Modern efforts are pale and ineffectual compared with his. He did not hesitate to invent names and incidents. He had

"l'audace, toujours l'audace." The Epistles are charged with passages of the most vivid personal description. They depict a man called Paul, and certain associates of his, in the most artistic manner, absolutely glorying in minute and life-like details, with results that have printed themselves indelibly on the memory and imagination of mankind. Now, we put it to one's judgment whether such delineations have the air of romance or of truth; also, whether it is likely that so great a literary prodigy as their author existed and remained unknown in the beginning of the second century. There is such a thing as the literary sense, and it does not require to be present even in any very refined degree, to enable us to come to some conclusion on this matter. Take the first two chapters of Galatians; or the remonstrance in the ninth of 1 Corinthians; or the first few verses of Romans ninth; or such words as these from 2 Corinthians seventh: "I am filled with comfort, I overflow with joy in all our affliction. For even when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no relief, but we were afflicted on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless He that comforteth the lowly, even God, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but also by the comfort wherewith he was comforted in you, while he told us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced yet more. For though I made you sorry with my epistle, I do not regret it, though I did regret; for I see that that epistle made you sorry, though but for a season." Or, the earlier anxious passage in the second chapter of the same Epistle: "Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ, and when a door was opened unto me in the Lord, I had no relief for my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia." Or, again, the never-to-be-forgotten passage in the eleventh chapter: "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers,

in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labour and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."

It is needless to multiply quotations. Such passages are scattered all over the Epistles. We simply ask: Is it possible to believe them purely fictitious? Are we merely in the presence of an exquisite stylist, who deceives us at his will with prolific passages of masterly delineation? Does Van Manen believe it? Romance, forgery, fiction! "Credat Judæus Apella."

6. Finally, the new criticism proceeds on arbitrary and subjective principles by which all historic literature could be proved untrustworthy. Historical problems are not to be solved or dissolved by the simple alchemy of the phrases, "it is not conceivable," "we cannot understand." The critics must sedulously curb their propensity to begin their sentences with the formula, "We may suppose." That way lie phantasy and illusion. The habit is the more amazing when we are being continually reminded that we are to have no more assumptions. Certainly the critics do not let their left hand know what their right hand doeth. When Van Manen pleads that he cannot form "any intelligible conception" of this or that—what does he expect to follow from such a confession? That the stubborn statements will forthwith vanish into thin air? But many excellent men have studied the Epistles, who have not been overwhelmed by the pressure of these perplexities. It is also evident that if our criterion of truth is to be our easy comprehension, a good deal even of very modern history will be in a perilous state. We would point out further, that, as true letters, the Epistles belong to the class of what is called occasional writings. In such documents much always will remain between the writer and his readers, which a later student, far off from the times and incidents, will find it very hard to understand or reconstruct. If this is true of all such literature, why should it be such a stumbling-block simply because the literature is

within the covers of the New Testament? "Every literature," says Gloël, "supplies instances of writings which are by no means free from obscure surroundings, if we seek to know every detail of their composition, but which are nevertheless ascribed without hesitation to a definite author. No one, *e.g.*, denies that 'Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott' was the work of Luther, although its exact date and the particular circumstances which called it forth are lost in obscurity. . . . The prudent historian must often be content to stand in his inquiries before unsolved and insoluble puzzles; and the theologian, in the same manner, when face to face with the New Testament, must recognise many historical difficulties which he cannot remove. The scientific task will often far rather consist in the recognition of existing difficulties than in their smooth solution."[1]

Van Manen is exceedingly sore on the point that the four Epistles are merely *assumed* to be authentic. He complains that his predecessors have been guilty of a "lack of desire for impartial research." He cannot have forgotten a book entitled, *Die sogenannten Pastoralbriefe des Apostels Paulus*, by F. C. Baur; or another, *Kritik der Epheser- und Kolosserbriefe*, by H. J. Holtzmann. Was there any unwillingness in these books either to study or to spare? Does he really believe that Baur and his school, and their successors in the German 'critical' school, and Renan himself, and many others of the old advanced guard, did not study the four Epistles critically, although they wrote a great deal about them; or that they deliberately blinded their eyes to the difficulties that are now so obvious, and point-blank refused to entertain them? If he does, he must not expect the world to believe that. Whatever they were, these men of earlier renown were not of souls so abject. Had they seen any reason to doubt these Epistles, we should have heard of it very distinctly. This, therefore, is another kind of assumption: that scholarship has

[1] Cit. Knowling, *Witness*, etc., p. 177.

not dared to call its soul its own until the emancipation heralded by Bruno Bauer and the creators of Paulus Episcopus. Holsten has said of the new critics: "A light footstep of two or three men—the sand shook, yielded, sank away, and the building collapsed." We fear the irony is not unmerited. Even in the paragraphs of the *Encyclopædia Biblica* there is too little of the spirit of modest quest, too much of the air of Daniel come to judgment. Yet there is another mood which is more admirable, and Van Manen is not a stranger to it. Ere he closes his articles in the *Expository Times*, he says, "Tandem bona causa triumphat." This is more the manner in which champions in the past have borne themselves. It certainly cannot be pleasant to have one's method described as "Die moderne Pseudokritik," or one's serious hypotheses dismissed as "unfounded phantasies." But if they are not really so, then, like Galileo and Bruno, the new critics will one day have their revenge. It is enough for the wise and the strong. To be *contra mundum* is frequently heroic; sometimes it is to be in the right, not seldom in the wrong; but in any case it never becomes Athanasius to be impatient.

Van Manen, who is of fighting instincts, is saddened because Holtzmann and Jülicher do not seem to regard him and his friends as foemen worthy of their steel. The new writers are only "put in the corner with a few great words," and that is all. As we have just said, to be thus neglected and treated 'ganz kurtz,' is hard for flesh and blood to bear. And we express our sympathy, because the quarter from which such contempt has come is not the quarter from which it was to be readily expected. Van Manen might say, "Et tu, Brute!" His arguments, after all, are in the main the arguments applied by the 'critical' school to other Epistles. May not the Dutchmen protest, 'We have only turned to another part of the field the guns you yourselves taught us to fire'? Much of the offence may lie here. There are circumstances in which men do not like to see their principles inexorably pushed. Harnack, we think, has spoken fairly of the later writers. He says:

"They have their strength in the difficulties and riddles which are contained in the history of the formation of the Catholic tradition in the second century." And yet he also adds: "The single circumstance that we are asked to regard as a forgery such a document as the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, appears to me, of itself, to be an unanswerable argument against the new hypotheses."[1]

We do not think, therefore, that any apology is needed for still standing in the line of the old tradition, hitherto held by both liberal and conservative alike. We too have no doubt studied with our preconceptions. Yet we are most firmly convinced that truth is not found along the route Van Manen opens. After reading and re-reading his pages, we feel persuaded that the old view of the Epistles is saner, more true to human nature, and even, as he himself might say, to a really "intelligible conception" of things. If we cannot say universally, we can still say that almost universally, the four great Epistles are regarded as indubitably what they profess to be, genuine letters of the Apostle, and, as such, a treasure of priceless value to the Christian Church.

## II.

## DESTINATION AND OCCASION OF THE EPISTLE.

Not the least important of the four principal Epistles, is the one which we take first, the Epistle to the Galatians. It is one of the most powerful pieces of literature that have come down to us from any age. It is earnest, eloquent, dramatic; well-ordered, concise, consistent; and it handles one of the most important themes with the most significant results.

From the first chapter to the last there is one great aim, never lost sight of—to unfold the banner of Christian

[1] *History of Dogma*, i. 52 n.

liberty, and nail it to the mast. The Church can scarcely reckon how much she owes to such a writing. It is the Magna Charta of her spiritual emancipation, and every verse is "half-battle for the free." It has been compared to the unfurling of the Standard of the Scottish Covenant. It has also been compared to the nailing of the Theses on the door of the Schlosskirche at Wittenberg, when Martin Luther roused the echoes of the world. In reality it is far greater than these, for it is the fount and origin from which they sprang. Luther had never been possible without Paul, and it was in Paul's Galatians that he found his freedom, and the use of his mighty wings. "This is my Epistle," he said; "I have espoused it; it is my Catherine von Bora." From this masterpiece he learnt the lesson he strove to teach the world—"to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."

Yet in some respects this Epistle is a subject of most perplexing controversy. This is not as to its genuineness, or as to its general drift and interpretation, for the Christian world is largely agreed on these things; but as to its exact place in Paul's life, and the persons to whom it is addressed. Clear and intelligible as it is in almost all other respects, it gives us little guidance on these questions, with the result that scholarship can scarcely yet be said to have reached finality, in deciding either as to its destination or as to its date.

The opinion commonly held, till at least comparatively recent years, is that the Galatians were converts whom Paul brought to the knowledge of Christianity during his second missionary journey, when, after passing through Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium, and the Spirit having forbidden him to speak the word in the province of Asia, he turned his steps northward to the district commonly known as Galatia. There he was detained by illness, and, being kindly treated, remained for some time evangelising the people. The chief towns of this district were Pessinus, Ancyra, and Tavium, and it has been thought that these were the places indicated by the expression "the Churches

of Galatia." It is not necessary, however, to commit one's self to these particular cities, and more recent and cautious writers (*e.g.*, Zöckler and Zahn) would rather restrict their thoughts to unnamed localities in the western and south-western borders of Galatia. But nowhere in Acts or in Paul's Epistles have we any mention of such places, although we know a little from secular history of the region referred to.

As far back almost as the light will carry us, we find that the country where these towns were situated was inhabited by the Phrygian race. The Phrygians were "a warrior tribe of conquerors who crossed the Hellespont from Europe, and penetrated gradually into Asia Minor."[1] "Mail-clad warriors" when they conquered the primitive people and settled among them, they in course of time lost their warlike character, and became in their turn an easy prey to a new horde of invaders who again swept into the country from the West. These were tribes of Gauls, who eventually gave the name Galatia to the country. In the fourth century before Christ, the Gauls began to move restlessly out of their forests in northern and western Europe. They overran Italy, and sacked Rome in the year 390 B.C. A century later they invaded Greece, and passed through Thrace into Asia Minor. For a while they carried everything before them, but at the close of the third century B.C. they were pretty well confined to the central mountainous districts, where the three cities we have named became the capitals of their clans. In the year 189 B.C. they were conquered by the Romans, although a succession of their princes was allowed to govern until the time of Augustus (25 B.C.). Their country was then formed into the Roman province of Galatia.

The inhabitants, however, were not all Gauls; indeed men of pure Gallic blood must in Paul's time have been greatly in the minority. A large Phrygian substratum

[1] Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, p. 7. In his *Hist. Comm. on Galatians*, p. 185, he speaks of the Phrygian conquest as about the tenth century B.C.

still remained, and although the name "Phryx" had grown to be a term of contempt, a mere synonym for slave, the old Phrygian religion, with some peculiarly wild orgiastic rites, seems to have persisted and become dominant. A Greek element, probably dating from the successors of Alexander the Great, was also present, although there does not seem to have been any pronounced Hellenic stamp on the population. Naturally the Romans were in evidence, and also, to some extent, the Jews. But traces of the latter are rather scanty. The country was not thoroughly opened up to commercial prosperity until as late as the third century A.D., and the Jews who found their way to the northern parts of Galatia previous to that time, were simply "immigrants of a secondary kind," removing from the busier and more advanced southern provinces.

If these northern parts were indeed the scene of Paul's labours, it naturally becomes a matter of interest to trace references in his Epistle that correspond to the characteristics of the inhabitants. This, however, has to be done with great caution, and elaborate parallels between the qualities attributed to the Galatians in the Epistle and the supposed peculiarities of the Gallic or Keltic race have, despite the glowing pages of Bishop Lightfoot, fallen into disrepute. The Epistle contains warnings against drunkenness and revelling, rebukes of niggardliness, of strife and vainglory, and of passionate anger. It brings before us also a natural impulsiveness, a quick acceptance and effusive hospitality, and no less a rapid forgetfulness and *volte face;* it refers also to superstitious tendencies to ritualistic observances, and an easy submissive servility to priestly authority. But it is not safe to argue from this that the readers must have been Gauls. Luther and others have pointed to the same characteristics as proof that they were Germans. These features are indeed too human for confident particularisation, and such a line of argument, even if we could possibly believe that most of Paul's converts were of true Gallic descent, is better avoided.

This traditionary view, however, which attributes the destination of the Epistle to the northern districts of

Galatia, has in recent years been somewhat rudely shaken. Opposed to it is the theory that Paul's "Churches of Galatia" are to be looked for farther south, in regions much better known to Scripture.

According to this theory, it was on his first and not on his second journey, that Paul entered the district which included the Churches addressed in the Epistle. He then visited the well-known towns, Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, and it is the converts made in these places whom he styles "Galatians." These towns are made very familiar to us in the book of Acts. The Apostle visited them again and again, and his experiences in them are recorded in considerable detail.

Crossing from Cyprus on his first journey, Paul landed on the mainland of Asia Minor at Perga in Pamphylia. Here, it is believed, he was seized with illness (Gal. iv. 13), which necessitated his moving farther inland, to the healthier mountain region that surrounded Antioch in Pisidia. Professor Ramsay is of opinion that this illness was malarial fever, which in certain of its forms would afflict the Apostle in a humiliating and painful way, and might very well be described as a "thorn in the flesh."[1] From Antioch a tour with Barnabas was made eastward and southward to Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. On the second missionary journey these towns were again visited, but in the reverse order; and similarly on the third journey. In this district we are still in the presence of a large Phrygian element among the population; the Greek and Roman elements, however, are more pronounced than in the northern country, while a strong Jewish influence is more clearly discerned and accounted for. Changeableness, impulsiveness, passionate anger, and superstitious ceremonialism, are not now merely to be inferred as racial characteristics, but are as matter of fact writ large in the narrative of the book of Acts.

Not many facts are to be gleaned regarding the history

[1] *St. Paul the Traveller*, pp. 94 sqq.; *Hist. Comm.* pp. 422 sqq. But the matter is much controverted.

of these towns. They all lay on the lofty tableland of south-central Asia Minor, and were in the most favourable position to share in the march of Græco-Roman civilisation, in the centuries immediately preceding and following the beginning of the Christian era. Antioch, the chief city of the group, lay on the rugged slopes of the great mountainous "backbone" of the country, about 220 miles east of Ephesus. It overlooked a vast plain, which was dotted with undulating hills, and flanked by precipitous mountains. It was a foundation of the Seleucid dynasty, and was accordingly strongly Hellenised in its civilisation. A few years before the birth of Christ, Augustus planted in it the veterans of the Fifth Legion as a Roman colony. This naturally threw a reflected glory on all its inhabitants, who now felt themselves more closely identified with the great Empire than their rustic neighbours were. Iconium lay between 70 and 80 miles farther east, and was important as a Phrygian frontier city, overlooking the plains of Lycaonia. Its site is spoken of as equal to that of Damascus for the luxuriant fertility of its surroundings, and as not far behind it in beauty. Some 20 miles south was Lystra, also made a colony by Augustus; and not far off to the south-west was Derbe. These last two were Lycaonian towns, although it is only within recent years that their sites have been identified with any approach to certainty. The language spoken by most of their inhabitants was probably that of the aboriginal settlers before the Phrygian conquest.

The district which included these four towns was, in New Testament times, rich and highly cultivated, but it owed its chief importance to the fact that the great highway from Ephesus to the East ran through it. Commerce and administration both passed over this route, ensuring a high advance in prosperity and civilisation. The Greek spirit and speech usually followed trade, and Antioch and Iconium especially were Hellenised long before the Romans came to rule over them. The Jews had also been introduced in large numbers as protégés of the Seleucid monarchs, and enjoyed many privileges. It is evident that

they made impressions on the thought and religion of their neighbours, but their influence with the rulers, due largely no doubt to their wealth, was a cause of constant jealousy. At bottom, however, in manners and customs, the bulk of the population remained Anatolian in type. It was never Rome's policy to interfere more than could be helped with the habits of the subject races. The native religions were permitted to flourish, and although it became fashionable to identify their gods with those of Greece and Rome, these gods yet remained essentially Asiatic. As a consequence, ingrained superstition and theosophical tendencies persisted long after the lands were brought under the Cross. "The Christianity of Phrygia," says Ramsay, "was never like the Christianity of Europe: sects of enthusiasts who perpetuated the old types in the new religion always flourished there, and the orthodox writers frequently inveigh against the numerous Anatolian heresies."[1]

The state of opinion as to these rival theories of destination—distinguished as North-Galatian and South-Galatian—is very much divided. It cannot by any means be said that the latter is in the majority, though we believe it is at present growing in favour with many scholars. Godet, Weiss, Wendt, Schürer, Blass, Zöckler, H. J. Holtzmann, Lipsius, Holsten, Schmiedel, Jülicher, Sieffert, with Lightfoot and most English commentators, uphold the older theory. Lightfoot's *Galatians*, and his reply to Renan in *Colossians*, are indispensable to its study. On the other hand, Niemeyer, Böttger, Thiersch, Renan, Weber, Hausrath, Pfleiderer, Weizsäcker, O. Holtzmann, Sabatier, Perrot, and above all Ramsay, are champions of the South-Galatian view. McGiffert in his *Apostolic Age*, Rendall and Sanday in the *Expositor* (Series iv. vol. ix., and Series v. vol. iii.), and Askwith in his Norrisian Essay on the *Destination and Date of Galatians*, give their adherence to the same theory. So also does Zahn in all essential points, although the

[1] *Hist. Geog. of Asia Minor*, pp. 24–25. On the characteristics of the old Phrygian religion, and its persistence after the conquest by the Gauls, cf. *Hist. Comm. on Galatians*, pp. 37–44, and 86 sqq.

dubiety existing in his mind as to the interpretation of the phraseology in Acts bearing on the question, leads him to think that certain unnamed localities in North Galatia ought to be included. Ramsay's books and articles, however, are by far the most important contributions yet made to this side of the subject. He is controverted in minute detail by Schmiedel's portion of the article on "Galatia" in the second volume of the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. On the whole, considering the short time it has been fairly in the field, the weighty support the South-Galatian theory has secured seems significant, if not prophetic.

First of all, it is on the face of it an exceedingly probable theory. It takes us at once into well-known Pauline territory, which the rival theory cannot be said to do. It seems a most likely thing that the Apostle should write thus earnestly to Churches where we know his interest was profound, and where he spent a great deal of time and strength. We should naturally marvel if Churches that originated such a keen controversy, and drew from the Apostle such a weighty Epistle, had disappeared so completely from Christian memory that no definite trace of them is to be found in Acts or elsewhere, and that their very existence is matter of conjecture. So complete a silence in such a case weighs largely in the mind, and however acutely the North-Galatian theory be pressed, the feeling persists.

The door, moreover, is quite open to the South-Galatian theory as an historical possibility. Paul in the name 'Galatia' follows his usual custom of adopting Roman provincial titles in the grouping of his Churches, *e.g.*, Achaia, Asia, Macedonia, etc.—as Peter also clearly does in the First Epistle. But the Roman province of Galatia in Paul's day was not confined to those regions which may be styled Galatia proper. It extended far beyond them. It was the Galatia taken into the Empire by Augustus on the death of King Amyntas in 25 B.C., and included the southern districts of Lycaonia, Isauria, south-eastern Phrygia, and a part of Pisidia. "After the Roman division into

provinces," says Hausrath, "the province of Galatia included all districts between the Taurus and Bithynia; Upper Pisidia, therefore, Upper Phrygia and Lycaonia, together with Galatia proper on the Halys; so that excepting Perga, all the places visited on the first journey lie within the limits of the province of Galatia."[1] This is now universally acknowledged to be "established beyond dispute."[2] For three-quarters of a century, therefore, before Paul wrote, the regions in question were 'Galatian,' according to Roman nomenclature, and they continued so for about another hundred years. In the middle of the second century the boundaries of this large province were changed; Lycaonia was made a province by itself, and the Galatian province was restricted to the region commonly known thereafter as Galatia.[3] The consequence was that in the Christian centuries men gradually forgot, or ceased to know, that the name ever had a wider reference. It was not until the nineteenth century that this knowledge became again the common property of history.

Further, the name 'Galatians' was a suitable form of address to apply to the dwellers in this southern region. It is difficult, indeed, to conceive what other single name could be used to designate collectively the inhabitants of Galatic Phrygia and Lycaonia and Pisidia. It is not strictly an ethnical title; it does not mean to assert the Gallic descent of the people addressed; it is entirely a generic term, such as any Roman writer or speaker would have used in the same circumstances. "When the Romans called a province by a definite name," says Ramsay, "they summed up the inhabitants of the province by the ethnic derived from the name. That is an axiom from which all

[1] *N.T. Times: Time of the Apostles*, iii. 146 n.

[2] So Schmiedel, *Ency. Biblica*, ii. col. 1597.

[3] In his *Hist. Geog. of Asia Minor* (p. 254) Ramsay gives a table to show the many changes of boundary through which the Roman province of Galatia passed during the first three centuries. The limits appear to have been altered no fewer than six times. The period of widest extension was from 63 A.D. to 78 A.D., and that of greatest shrinkage from 140 or 150 A.D. to 297 A.D.

historical and archæological students start. It was necessary in the administration of a province to have some designation for the whole body of provincials: *Afri*, all the people of Africa Provincia, whatever their race; *Baetici*, of Baetica Hispania; *Asiani*, of Asia; and *Galatae*, of Galatia."[1] It was not only, therefore, a natural form of address, but it was one likely to be very pleasing to the audience. It recognised them as part of the great Empire that was so popular and powerful among them, and as two of the cities ranked as colonies, they might have demurred to any other treatment. Mr. Askwith compares this use of the name 'Galatians' to that of the word 'British' as including both English and Scotch without offending either. To us such a usage on Paul's part seems no more strange than if a German writer, fifty years hence, should call the inhabitants of Alsace and Lorraine 'Germans,' supposing that after the lapse of two or three generations these provinces are still embraced in the German fatherland. Even now, it is said, within a generation of the annexation, and after much bitterness of feeling, there are Alsacians who are quite ready to call themselves Germans. Some might prefer to be called Alsacians, but Germans would be neither unnatural nor wrong. And we must remember that, in the case of the South Galatians, there was no ill-feeling to overcome. They would not be repelled by the implication of the Roman connection. They were proud of it. It is very doubtful whether they would have welcomed any purely ethnical address, whether as Phrygians, Gauls, or Lycaonians.

To Professor Ramsay is also largely due the elucidation of the history, which makes the inhabitants of South Galatia much more probable recipients of the Galatian Epistle than their neighbours in North Galatia. The Epistle implies on the part of its readers no small standard of educated and civilised life, as well as familiarity with Greek usages and laws. It is an historical certainty that in Paul's time there was a distinct line of demarcation between the peoples

[1] *Hist. Comm.* p. 319.

of North and South Galatia in these respects. In the first century, as we have seen, the advance in South Galatia was obvious and easily accounted for. In North Galatia there was not at that period much intercourse with the great world either East or West. The highway did in time come to pass through the northern districts, when they made rapid progress, but it was not until after the days of Dionysius, at the close of the third century. Up to that time, North Galatia lay aside in one of the mere backwaters of the Empire. Rome did not find it with the same Greek impress that had already long distinguished the South. "The evidence," says Ramsay, "is overwhelming. About A.D. 50 Galatia was essentially un-Hellenic. Roman ideas were there superinduced directly on a Galatian system, which had passed through no intermediate stage of transformation to the Hellenic type." Again, "Paul's allusions presuppose a considerable amount of education among the Galatians. He does not address them as a mere set of ignorant and untutored rustics: he addresses them as persons living amid the organised administration of cities."[1] No doubt Professor Ramsay's account of matters will have to stand the examination of qualified scholars. He himself, however, is universally recognised as one of the first authorities on the history and geography of Asia Minor. He has made this field peculiarly his own. And whatever may be said of a few isolated deductions in which the basis of first-hand evidence is not great, his recent Commentary on the Epistle produces a cumulative effect which is not likely to be altogether effaced.

Again, the South-Galatian theory harmonises with the account Luke gives of Paul's movements in Acts xvi. (second journey), and xviii. (third journey). Both sides are agreed that the correct rendering of the geographical phrase in Acts xvi. 6 is, "the Phrygo-Galatic region." This means a region to which both terms, Phrygian (ethnologically), and Galatian (officially), were applicable; and it exactly suits the region round about Iconium and Antioch.

[1] *Hist. Comm.* pp. 160 and 370.

Phrygia was a large country, and lay partly[1] in the province of Galatia, and partly in that of Asia. The compound expression correctly defines the part of Phrygia which was included in Galatia, as distinguished from that part which lay in Asia; a distinction Luke is led to make by the consideration, that he is just about to refer to the fact that the missionaries were forbidden to speak the word in Asia. On the other hand, the North-Galatian theory takes the phrase to refer to Galatia proper, the territory originally conquered and peopled by the Gauls. But if so, it must be asked what explanation can be given of the periphrasis? Why did Luke in such a case not use the simple name 'Galatia'? To represent his language as equivalent to "the country once Phrygia now Galatia," imputes to him a "pedantic antiquarianism," of which he could not possibly have been guilty. Ramsay is warranted, we believe, in his strong deduction: "The term Galatic excludes Galatia in the narrow sense; and xvi. 6, when taken according to contemporary usage, asserts that Paul did not traverse North Galatia."[2]

Acts xviii. 23 refers to the third journey, in which Paul entered the country through the Syrian and Cilician Gates, having for his objective the Asian province, where he had on the second journey been forbidden to speak the word. In making progress to this province it is said he went through "the Galatic region and Phrygia" (for the Greek word here rendered Phrygia ought, we think, to be taken as a noun). He went through it, Luke says, "in order, stablishing all the disciples," so that old ground, and all of it, from first to last, is meant to be covered by the expression. It includes therefore all Churches from Derbe to Antioch, that is, to where the new territory (the Asian province) begins. Hence it takes in a part which was not Phrygian but yet was Galatic, namely, the two Lycaonian

[1] Ramsay has proved from authorities contemporary with Paul that the term 'Galatic' was regularly used to denote "parts of the province of Galatia." He says that it was this discovery that first convinced him that the North-Galatian theory is irreconcilable with Acts.

[2] *Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 81.

towns Lystra and Derbe with their environs, which were then a part of the province of Galatia. They were Lycaono-Galatic as distinguished from Phrygo-Galatic. The simple word Phrygia is now to be taken as equivalent to the compound expression of xvi. 6, and may now be so used without ambiguity, because Asian-Phrygia is no longer to be excluded.

We have further to determine what is to be understood by the participial phrase in xvi. 6, "forbidden to speak the word in Asia." The question is, must this phrase necessarily be retrospective and causal, giving the reason why "they went through the Phrygo-Galatic region"? or, may it be used predicatively, and bear the meaning, given it by the Authorised Version, "and were forbidden," thus indicating that the prohibition was *subsequent* to the journey through this region? There can only be one answer. Such a predicative use of the participle is not only possible, but, though a loose construction, was perfectly common.[1] If we accept it in this case, it substantiates the South-Galatian view, because it means that the region described as Phrygo-Galatic was passed through before the prohibition (or before the prohibition became operative) regarding the province of Asia.

This discussion of Acts is really of first importance, though not so much for the South-Galatian theory as for its rival. For, whatever view we take of it, it does not affect the "established" fact that Antioch and the other three cities were part and parcel of the province of Galatia. This is the sure basis on which the South-Galatian theory rests, and it can only have been a temporary forgetfulness of the true position, that led Dr. Chase to speak about the theory "making shipwreck on the rock of Greek grammar." It is for the North-Galatian theorists that these passages in Acts are so exceedingly crucial. They must find foundation here, or they will find it nowhere; and it is evident they will find it here only with great difficulty.

[1] Cf. the examples and whole discussion in Askwith's third chapter, *Destination and Date of Galatians.*

But even if it were proved that Paul turned into the "borders" of North Galatia at this point, the mind must be disabused of the notion that the South-Galatian theory therefore falls to the ground. This is what Zahn perceives. He thinks it likely that Paul went into the south-west part of North Galatia; but this does not at all disturb the fact that the Churches of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, were "Churches of Galatia." Antioch and her neighbours hold the field; and these obscure references of Luke, even if taken in a sense different from that which we believe to be correct, cannot thrust them out.

The debate is pursued into a great many minor details, which it is unnecessary to discuss at length. When we try to harmonise the time and labours of the second journey, it becomes almost impossible to include a sojourn in North Galatia of sufficient length for the implied results; nor is it easy to understand where Paul intended going, if he took ill in North Galatia *en route*. Further, when he starts on his third journey, it is expressly to visit the Churches "in order, stablishing all the disciples"; but this cannot have been done if the district referred to in Acts xviii. 23 were exclusively North Galatia; important parts, already evangelised, were then left out. Again, if Galatia means North Galatia, then the southern Churches seem never, as far as our records go, to have been included in Paul's exhortations to join his great scheme of a Collection for the Saints. Yet, in point of fact, we find deputies from them (Acts xx. 4) taking part in this important scheme, while no mention is made of deputies from the northern cities. And not only are they not appealed to for the Collection, they are, on this hypothesis, dropped by Paul out of all further reference whatever. Churches, whose very existence we have to imagine, receive the attention. These considerations weigh against the North-Galatian theory. On the other hand, there are details which support its rival. For example, in the second chapter of the Epistle (ver. 5), we find Paul saying that the conflict at Jerusalem was "that the truth of the gospel might continue with" his readers. This conflict, we believe, took place

before the second journey, whence we naturally infer that the Galatians were converts of the first journey, or South Galatians. Lastly, certain more minute matters, such as the references to Barnabas, to the inconsistency as to circumcision (allowed to be an implied reference to Timothy), to the working of miracles, and to the 'marks of the Lord Jesus,' are in obvious harmony with incidents of the recorded visits to the southern cities.

With regard to date, no decisive information is given in the Epistle itself. Nor does it necessarily follow from the adoption of the South-Galatian theory that the chronological position must be first in the new group, although that theory makes this very probable. Paul, we believe, indicates that he had visited his readers twice before he wrote,[1] and therefore he would appear to be writing at a period between his second and third journeys. Though he marvels (i. 6) that his converts are removing from him to a different gospel "so quickly," this must not be forced to mean "immediately."[2] Their change was relatively rapid enough, even though he did not know of it until he was just on the eve of starting to see them for the third time. Many writers, however, hesitate to put the Epistle first in the group. They do so chiefly on grounds of subject-matter and style. Its similarities on these points to 2 Corinthians and Romans, are great and obvious. The battle against the Judaistic Christians links it to the former, and the clear enunciation of the doctrine of Justification by Faith brings it close to the latter. Hence it is placed between 2 Corinthians and Romans. Bishop Lightfoot has elaborated this argument to perfection. Many distinguished scholars have followed in his train, unable to shake them-

[1] It is generally thought that the expression τὸ πρότερον (iv. 13) indicates that two visits had taken place before the letter was written. At the same time it is not so absolutely decisive as to preclude the possibility of more visits than two, and therefore also of a later date.

[2] Cf. Lightfoot *in loc.* "Quickness and slowness are relative terms. The rapidity of a change is measured by the importance of the interests at stake" (Introd. to *Galatians*, p. 42).

selves from the conviction, that so much similarity can only be accounted for by simultaneity. One may venture to think, however, that too much stress has been laid on the principle, that thoughts and expressions so similar could only be "the offspring of one birth in the writer's mind."[1] If a man finds it necessary to write more than once on a theme over which he has worked much, and taught much, and felt deeply, it is certain that, even though there should be a considerable interval between his writings, he will repeat himself on the later occasions. The old modes of expression will inevitably spring to his pen, all the more if the subjects are those he frequently handles in his ordinary labours. Besides, although the family likeness is undoubted, Galatians and Romans are not exactly twins.[2] Most readers readily perceive that in many respects Romans is the child of a maturer growth. Lightfoot acknowledges that it is an obvious advance on Galatians, and that the difference between them may be compared to that between a rough model and a finished statue.[3] There does not, therefore, seem any insuperable barrier to giving the Epistle a somewhat earlier date than most English writers give it. No doubt it belongs to the same group as Corinthians and Romans, but its relative position may quite as well be before them as between them.[4] The majority of Continental scholars, even though upholders of the North-Galatian theory, place it early. With our present knowledge, the matter is only one of probability at the best. On the whole it seems a very likely suggestion, that Paul wrote the Epistle from Syrian Antioch when he was about to start on his third journey, and when he first heard, probably through Timothy, of the Galatian defec-

[1] Professor Findlay, *The Epistles of Paul*, p. 291.

[2] On the relation between them cf. P. Wernle, *Der Christ und die Sünde bei Paulus*, pp. 91–92.

[3] *Galatians*, p. 49. Cf. Sabatier, p. 155, "It is indeed a masterly sketch ; the Epistle to the Romans turns the sketch into a picture."

[4] "The argument which Bishop Lightfoot based on resemblances of thought and language between Galatians and Romans rests upon facts that are indisputable, but does not carry with it any certain inference as to date" (Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, p. xxxviii).

tion.[1] This, according to Turner's chronology, would be in the year 52; according to Ramsay, in 53.

Happily the Apostle's message is not in itself greatly affected by the question whether he wrote to the Galatians of the North or South, or whether he wrote a few years earlier or later. The condition of affairs with which he deals, and his mode of dealing with it, are matters of no uncertainty. The Epistle is a noble plea for the emancipation of Christianity from the bondage of Judaism. Had that not been accomplished, Christianity, instead of stretching out to a world-wide dominion, would have shrunk to the dwindling career of a Jewish sect.

We shall briefly recall how the conflict had arisen, and the necessity for the Epistle.

Drawn from comparative seclusion in his native Cilicia, Paul had joined Barnabas with great ardour in evangelistic labours at Antioch in Syria. Out of their success in that work sprang the first missionary journey. By divine call, and by the solemn prayers and laying on of hands of the brethren, the two friends were sent forth as messengers of the Church of Antioch. They passed across Cyprus, and came to the city of Antioch in Pisidia. Their custom was to go direct to their Jewish brethren in the synagogues, and to endeavour to spread the good news among them. It was the most obvious and natural method, and hitherto

[1] Cf. *Paul the Traveller*, pp. 191, 192. As there is no mention in the Epistle of the general Collection for the Saints, it is thought we have another reason for probably dating the Epistle before Corinthians and Romans, in which such a theme bulks largely. The words in 1 Cor. ix. 2, "If to others I am not an Apostle, yet at least I am to you," may possibly point back to the Galatian challenge of his authority.

Professor Bruce in *St. Paul's Conception of Christianity*, pp. 52–55, places Galatians before Corinthians and Romans on logical grounds, meaning thereby that Paul was likely to be called on to defend himself in the following order: (1) his peculiar view of the Law (Galatians); (2) his personal Apostleship (1 and 2 Corinthians); (3) his view regarding the value of Israel's election (Romans). But no great stress can be put upon this. We cannot argue that because a situation comes first logically, it must have come first in reality.

In his article on the chronology of the New Testament in Hastings' *Bible Dict.* i. 423, Mr. Turner leaves the date of Galatians open between a period of five years, 50–55 A.D.

conversion to the Christian faith had taken place to a large extent under the shadow of the synagogue. But at Pisidian Antioch there was a most important change, forced upon the missionaries by the opposition of the Jews. Paul and Barnabas were emboldened to speak the memorable words: "Seeing ye judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." The Gentiles heard this utterance with joy; many believed, and, despite the violent opposition of the Jews, "the word of the Lord was published through all the region."

When the two missionaries returned to their starting-point in Syria, they proclaimed how God had opened the door to the Gentiles, and the Church of Antioch seems to have rejoiced with them in the fact. But irritation and alarm were felt elsewhere. The Church at Jerusalem was naturally most conservative in clinging to the old order of things. Among the converts there, Christianity had been superimposed upon Judaism, and Judaism seemed to them the only foundation on which it could rest. It was their custom still to attend the Temple, to keep the feasts, to observe sabbaths and new moons, and days and months and years. They believed that the whole Mosaic legislation continued in force, not for themselves alone, but for all who would enter the kingdom of God. Their motives, as Paul asserts (vi. 12–13), were not always pure. But most of them no doubt were honestly persuaded that the Gentiles also must conform to the rites of the Law. Hence the admission of Gentiles into the Church quite independently of Judaism, was a rude blow to their conceptions of the relation between the old faith and the new. Anxious emissaries proceeded from Jerusalem to Antioch, to declare that circumcision was necessary to salvation. Immediately the fires of controversy were kindled round this crucial point. Paul and Barnabas went up to the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem, to have it discussed and set at rest. Paul was strenuous and irresistible. He had conference with the three leaders, Peter, John, and James the Lord's brother, who was now president of the Church at Jerusalem. He explained what he had done among the

Gentiles, and eagerly sought, not that they should give such action their authority, for he knew he had authority for it from a far higher source, but that they should see eye to eye with him in the matter, and save the Church from scandal and calamity. Things hung in the balance; nevertheless the three "pillars of the Church" did endorse the action of the missionaries, and when the Apostles and elders met and the Council was held, the initiative was taken by Peter in a truly noble and generous speech.[1] He was followed by Paul and Barnabas, and finally by James, with the result that it was decided that the Gentiles were not to be bound to accept Judaism, though certain forms of abstinence were commended as needful in the transition from the old life.[2] This was the famous decision of the Council of Jerusalem, based not on abstract theory, but simply on the guidance of plain providential facts in the success of Gentile missions—the issue of the conflict in which Paul tells the Galatians he had striven in their interest, that "the word of the gospel might continue with them."

It is very important, however, to note the decision to recognise two spheres of missions, that of the circumcision with Peter as its leader, and that of the uncircumcision with Paul as its leader. It did not at once dawn on the Church that if the gospel freed the Gentile from the Law, it must also free the Jew. This was bound, as we shall see, to become a source of trouble when Jewish and Gentile Christians existed side by side.

The matter, therefore, did not really end with the Council. So far as its decision was favourable to the liberty of the Gentiles, it cut too deeply into Jewish

[1] "This act of noble, self-denying magnanimity," says Pfleiderer, "saved the future of Christianity in a critical moment; and for that reason the Church justly holds the memory of Peter in high honour" (Hibbert Lectures, pp. 107–108).

[2] These injunctions recall the Noachid rules, intended for Gentiles who dwelt within the gates of Israel. Cf. Schürer, *Jewish People*, II. ii. 318 sq. The meaning was that converts should at the very least abstain from things that were peculiarly offensive to the Jews.

prejudices and convictions, and there were many ardent Jewish Christians who could not accept it. Paul and Barnabas returned from Jerusalem to Antioch, and shortly afterwards Peter came down to Antioch also.[1] In harmony with the decrees, and doubtless with his own truest instincts, Peter at once associated with the Gentile converts, as if there were no distinction between them. Then "certain from James" appeared and reproached him, so that he changed his conduct and withdrew from social relations with uncircumcised brethren, influencing others, even Barnabas himself, to follow his example. The consequence would likely have been disastrous, had not Paul again proved himself equal to the occasion. He withstood Peter to the face, and though we have no account of how the dispute proceeded, we may infer that Peter acknowledged his error. At all events, Paul was not compelled to break with the Apostles, but, continuing in harmony with them, went forward in perfect liberty to do as he had done, namely, to hold open the door of a free gospel to the Gentiles.

Nevertheless, the freedom for which Paul strove, was not to be gained in one or two encounters. It had to be fought for in many battles, and almost wherever the gospel was preached. Judaistic Christianity took shape in a very definite and uncompromising form. The Apostle of the Gentiles soon felt how subtle and indefatigable was the opposition he would have to face. His opponents would carry the war into every field, and even on the dearest spots where he had suffered and bled to win a foothold, they would spare no effort to undermine his position.[2]

[1] Some regard the encounter with Peter at Antioch as preceding the Council at Jerusalem. This would save Peter from the charge of vacillation. Yet at Antioch there was the new issue—*Jewish* liberty.

[2] Jewish zeal in contact with the Gentiles was of course quite familiar with the admission to Judaism of Gentiles who did not conform to the whole law. These were simply the 'God-fearing' (σεβόμενοι), and many were content to remain at that stage. But the natural desire of earnest converts was to press farther, and there were plenty of zealots to encourage them to accept the whole law, and so become in the true sense 'proselytes.' The experience of King Izates of Adiabene, who was freely admitted to Judaism by one

It was so in Galatia. Paul visited his Churches there a second time, when he did not apparently find any great cause for alarm, though he seems to have given them serious warnings (i. 9). But in his footsteps there soon appeared the teachers whom he had reason to dread. They laboured diligently and insidiously, and, saddest of all, with a great measure of success. So startling was the change they produced, and in so comparatively short a time, that Paul could liken their influence only to a bewitching spell. Called into liberty, and obtaining the quickening of new life in perfect liberty, the Galatians nevertheless yielded to the persuasion that Paul was in error, that his gospel was unauthorised and defective, and that it was needful for them to accept the ancient Law, which God had clearly given, and which it could not be shown He had ever abrogated.

When news reached the Apostle of this lamentable change, it fell on him like a bolt from a clear sky. He had not anticipated that a position so gloriously won could be so easily and so ignobly surrendered. He was filled with grief and alarm. He sat down to write a letter [1] that,

Rabbi, and finally was persuaded to accept circumcision by another, was very typical. The Jewish Christians of Palestine appear nearly all to have held extreme opinions, and to have bitterly resented a full entrance into the Messianic hopes, if their peculiar distinctions were not accepted. Cf. Josephus, *Antiq.* xx. ii. 4; Derenbourg, *Palestine*, pp. 224–225; and Graetz, *History of the Jews*, ii. 217 sqq., and 387–388.

[1] Literally, of course, he dictated to an amanuensis. Only the closing part is autographic. Deissmann (*Bible Studies*, pp. 346 sqq.) has a curious note on the words, "See with how large letters I write unto you with mine own hand" (vi. 11). He thinks this is a piece of amiable irony, playfully designed to humour the Galatians ere the Epistle closes. "Large letters are calculated to make an impression on children; and it is as his own dear foolish children he treats the Galatians." This cannot be said to commend itself for its insight into the relations between Paul and his readers. His purpose was clearly emphasis, not levity. Deissmann also (pp. 350 sqq.), following a suggestion of Stade, gives a novel interpretation of the "marks of the Lord Jesus" (vi. 17). He regards these as *protective signs*, and thinks that Paul, in a mixture of earnest and amiable jest, speaks of his wounds received in apostolic labour, as the marks of Jesus which protected him as by a *charm*. He supports this by references to analogies in a third century papyrus, preserved in the Leyden Museum. But again his suggestion is more ingenious than probable.

by God's grace, would save his converts from their folly, by reviving the earlier and nobler spirit, and by exposing the fatal nature of the exchange they were making.

It is not difficult to gather, from the tenor of the Epistle, what was the character of the opposition which the Jewish emissaries directed against the Apostle. It was weighty and subtle, and could not be despised. Those who engaged in it were apparently men of note and reputation. Paul indicates one especially, whom he does not name, but whose personality might prove dazzling to the converts (v. 10). The great aim was to propagate the gospel of the circumcision, inculcating with that many other Jewish rites. This was represented as an advance; not a giving up of the religion of faith, but a making of it "perfect."

To ensure the success of such a propaganda several methods were adopted.

1. First of all, it was necessary to sweep away the influence of the Apostle. His authority was denied. Who was he, and whence had he derived his mission? He was no Apostle; he was a mere subordinate of the Apostles. They had given him any knowledge of the gospel he possessed, and yet he dared to pit himself against them, and to move on lines of his own. Moreover, he was a deceiver and inconsistent. He was ready to do anything merely to 'persuade' and to 'please men' (i. 10). He was against circumcision in Galatia, but elsewhere he 'preached' (v. 11) what here he so vehemently condemned. Who could trust such a man? He was a time-server, zealous for his own glory, and not for the truth.

2. Not only so, his gospel was imperfect, and fatal to the highest interests of his hearers. It cut them off from the promises, and from the great religious revelation of the past. There was only one way of becoming children of Abraham, and children of Abraham were the only heirs of the divine covenant. This self-styled Apostle taught them to regard as dispensable and of no moment what God Himself had ordained. Yet the Law was binding, and power and blessedness could never rest on those who despised it.

3. Further, not only was this doctrine of Paul false in

principle, it was certain to prove fatal in its results. The Law was the only safeguard of a moral life. To abolish it was to remove the surest barrier against the pagan and vicious life, from which many had been redeemed. The helps and checks and discipline it afforded would disappear. Liberty from the Law would spell lawlessness in the end, and the inevitable fruit would be licence, ruinous and unrestrained.

Such was the opposition which was at work among the Churches of Galatia, and which drew from the Apostle his weighty Epistle.

## III.

## ARGUMENT OF THE EPISTLE.

It was necessary for Paul to adjust his defence to the nature of the attack made upon him. With a writer so emotional and impassioned, it is not to be expected that the argument will flow in absolutely clear and undeviating channels. The swelling flood will sometimes overflow its banks. In all parts of the Epistle there are indignant repellings of the personal accusations against his disinterestedness and good faith. But in the main the lines of the reply are very distinct, and, as it happens, our divisions into chapters mark them clearly. There are six chapters in the Epistle: in two, Paul defends his authority and independence as an Apostle; in two, he defends the truth of his message; and in two, he defends and commends the new life in the Spirit.

I. Paul soon enters the lists against the attacks upon his authority. An Apostle! Who makes an Apostle? Is it man, or Jesus Christ and God? From the divine source he derives his right to be heard. He has preached a gospel because God gave it to him, and no human being ever inspired it, or added to it one iota. In very simple and touching language he recalls his conversion. It was for him the pivot round which all else revolved. He does

not go into details, for doubtless it had been an oft-told story among the Galatians. But he brings out the fact, essential for his purpose, that it was by the revelation of Jesus Christ, the good pleasure of God revealing His Son in him. It was no sermon of Peter at Pentecost, nor appeal of Stephen before his judges or in the hour of death, that had subdued his soul and illumined it with the truth of the gospel. It was the overpowering light that shone on the road to Damascus, the vision and voice of the crucified but living Christ. From that holy and transcendent source, his gospel to the Gentiles sprang. Could any of the Twelve show an authority greater or more decisive?

They said he was instructed by the Apostles. Let his readers, then, consider what his intercourse with the Apostles had been. For many years he scarcely even knew them. The result of his conversion was not to send him flying into the arms of the Apostles. It led him "to confer not with flesh and blood." He retired into Arabia, and afterwards returned to Damascus. It was not until three years had passed that he went up to Jerusalem. There he saw Peter, and also James the Lord's brother, but he was not with them more than a few days. He next spent many years in the regions of Syria and Cilicia. The Churches of Judea would not have known him even by sight. All they knew was that he who once persecuted, now preached the faith, for which they glorified God. How absurd, therefore, to say that he owed his instruction to Jerusalem! He had laboured in the gospel, and attained fame as a preacher, during long years in which his relations with Jerusalem were of the slightest possible kind.

But they said also that he was inconsistent. He contended for a liberty in Galatia, which he was prudent enough not to say much about in other places. That he was misrepresented could easily be shown by the simple facts. Would it surprise them to learn two things: first, that he had vigorously contended for this very liberty among the leaders in Jerusalem; and again, that for its sake he had withstood Peter to the face in Antioch, and

that on both occasions he had triumphed? There was inconsistency somewhere, but it was not in him.[1]

And so, in the first ten verses of the second chapter, Paul gives an account of what took place in the memorable discussion at Jerusalem, which ended in the decrees of the Council, almost entirely in his favour.[2] He shows clearly, that not merely did that conference add nothing to him, but that it completely endorsed all that he had done among the Gentiles. The gospel of the uncircumcision was recognised as winning success by the same divine power that inspired the gospel of the circumcision. Far from interdicting him, the 'pillars of the Church,' James and Peter and John, gave him the right hand of fellowship, and bade him God-speed on his mission. Not only so, a very significant thing took place at Jerusalem—a test case. Titus was with him, and there were important personages who would have liked well to see his Greek friend circumcised.[3]

[1] In the second chapter Paul is still recounting his intercourse with the Apostles, and it is of course in his mind to show how little he was indebted to them. But it is plain that at the same time he is bent on bringing out his championship of gospel liberty elsewhere than in Galatia. In so doing, it will be observed, he refers to comparatively recent experiences. It is probable that at an early stage of his career he had not been so clear in his views of the relation between the law and the gospel. In ch. v. 11 he does not explicitly deny that he had ever preached circumcision. What he denies is that he continued to preach it. His views had been clarified, partly by controversy, but most of all by providential leading, and by deeper spiritual insight into the nature of the gospel.

[2] Probably Paul would rather have had the decision without the three or four recommendations of abstinence. But these were not likely to do much harm. Soon all reference to them seems to have been dropped.

It is almost the unanimous opinion that in this passage (ii. 1–10) Paul is recounting what took place during his visit at the time of the Council. A few, however, think that in these first and second chapters he is giving a seriatim account of all his visits to Jerusalem, and that consequently this is an account of the visit with the gifts from Antioch, recorded in Acts xi. 30, which otherwise would not be enumerated. Professor Ramsay strenuously maintains this view, although he stands almost alone in the opinion.

[3] "Being a Greek" (ii. 3). "There seems to be a tacit allusion to the case of Timothy. 'You maintain,' St. Paul seems to argue, 'that I allowed the validity of the Mosaic law in circumcising Timothy (Acts xvi. 1, 3). But Timothy was half of Jewish parentage. How did I act in the case of Titus, a true Gentile? I did not yield for a moment'" (Lightfoot *in loc.*).

Did he yield to them? Not for a single hour. Imposing as they seemed to be, they could not win from him a surrender so compromising.

He will relate also what took place at Antioch. Peter (and Barnabas too, alas!) had first associated with the Gentile converts, and then, under baneful influence from Jerusalem, had refused to do so. How deplorable was such conduct! It sent a line of cleavage into Christian society. It introduced a system of caste, whereby Gentile Christians would be discouraged, and made to feel that they were inferior. It said to them: 'You may be worthy to be received into the Church of Christ, but you are not worthy to associate with us who live at a higher level. Faith in Christ is good, but faith in Christ is very imperfect if you do not add to it the righteousness of the Law.' Could a more striking object-lesson be given, of the extreme peril of the course against which he, Paul, contended? Had he not condemned this, he would have been unfaithful to his divine trust. Who was inconsistent? Not he: but the man who at Jerusalem encouraged the gospel of the uncircumcision, and at Antioch turned his back upon it; who, himself a Jew, lived as a Gentile, and yet sought to force the Gentiles to live as the Jews!

More than this, Peter's error was not merely a weak vacillation under pressure, it was a sin against the light. He was a Jew, as Paul himself was. And what had they as Jews proven beyond all dispute? This—that no man among them was ever justified by the Law, but by faith in Christ. On that common ground they became Christians. They had been forced to leave the Law, and cast themselves on Christ. And now it was declared essential to go back to that which they acknowledged never did and never could save them!

In brief but most pregnant and significant words, Paul gives his own experience (vv. 19–21). The Law condemned him. Far from achieving righteousness by it, he found himself overwhelmed, brought under the judgment of death. But the Son of God loved him, and gave Himself for him. If Paul must die for sin, he died—but

how? In a mystical union with his Redeemer: he was "crucified with Christ." Did he die then? Literally, no; but in relation to the Law in all its power and effects, yes. He lived, but what life? A new life in the flesh, even a life transformed and upheld by ardent devotion to the Son of God. Mysterious as it may seem, it was for him a profoundly true experience,—the life he lived was Christ living in him. To think of any other life would indeed make the grace of God in vain. If they talked of righteousness by the Law, let them answer this: For what purpose did the Messiah die? The awful dilemma confronts them: either Christ saves, and the Law is vain for salvation; or the Law stands, and the Cross of Christ is of no effect.

In his own life Paul had thus experienced the truth and power of his gospel. But he was not the only one who had thus proved it. He appeals to the experience of the Galatians themselves (iii. 1–5). They too knew what the gospel of faith in Christ had done, and was able to do. They were glamoured and unsettled for a moment. But let them recall how it was, when at first the crucified Christ had been "placarded" before their eyes. Was that not a time of joy and grace? What marvellous works were wrought among them! Revive that blessed past, and reflect—what was the secret of its power? Was it by works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith? Their own experience was eloquent, if they would only let it speak. The works of the flesh did little for them. How can they ever dream that to return to them is the way of "perfection"? That is no advance. Alas! it is foolish retrogression.

II. But it was not sufficient for the Apostle to appeal to experience. His opponents appealed to authority. They professed not only to have the Church of Jerusalem with them, but to be really standing in the line of the divine revelation. They claimed that the Scriptures themselves were on their side. It is clear that if such a claim were established, the position of the Apostle would be sadly shaken, and his appeal to experience rendered full of suspicion.

How, then, did Paul meet this view of the matter? He did not shrink from the challenge, but turned to Scripture with even more confidence than his opponents. The revelation of the past seemed to be in their favour only because it was not understood.

His thesis must be kept distinctly in mind—salvation is by faith, and not by the works of the Law. The establishment of this is the pith of the Epistle. Close-packed as his argument from Scripture is, it is not difficult to make out the line along which he moves.

1. First, he begins by citing the case of Abraham. Nothing seemed to him surer than that Abraham's acceptance with God was through faith. The Old Testament itself recorded that "he believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Shining like a star, therefore, in the forefront of the Revelation, is the Father of the Faithful himself. And because it was the divine intention to receive the nations, just as Abraham had been received, God gave the gospel to the patriarch when He said: "In thee shall all nations be blessed." Abraham owed all to grace, and when men of any nation come to God in the same spirit of lowly faith, they are the true children of Abraham. The relationship with him is not one of blood, nor does it need to be marked by any external seal. It is deeper and truer because it is spiritual. Thus Abraham is to Paul the "pioneer of a religion of grace and faith destined for all nations"; "the spiritual ancestor of Christianity and of Christendom. Before there was an Israelitish nation and commonwealth, before there was a Mosaic Law as the foundation for that commonwealth, there was formed between the heart of the Father in heaven and a solitary human heart, which sought God above nature, a covenant of personal intercourse of fatherly disclosures and filial acts of confidence which continued and was developed as a sacred tradition—first in a family of friends of God, and then in a nation growing out of the family; and that covenant was the germ of the religion of salvation for all the nations of the earth. That is the element of most certain truth in the biblical

story of Abraham which the penetration of the Apostle discovers."[1]

2. Consider, on the other hand, Paul continues, how it is with the Law. Blessing is promised in Abraham, but does the Law bring blessing? Nay verily; it brings a curse (iii. 10). Why? Because no man is able to keep it perfectly, and sooner or later it whispers in every heart the sentence of death. If it be necessary to continue in all things that are written in the book of the Law to do them, it is surely plain that no flesh will be justified in God's sight. The Apostle declares that it is not he alone who says this. The prophet Habakkuk had a true if incomplete prevision of it, when he said: "The just shall live by faith." The Law itself has only the sad message, 'There is life in obedience.' Over disobedience there hangs the curse, beyond the power of the Law to remove. But cannot the curse be removed? It can be, and it has been. Christ has taken it upon Himself on the Cross. He bore it for us, not for Jews only, but for the Gentiles also, that they might receive the blessing of Abraham, the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The Law, then, is powerless to save, simply because its way of salvation, perfect obedience, is not possible.

3. It is not the Law, but the promise to Abraham, which stands first. Take an illustration from ordinary affairs. When a man has made a Will, and it has been duly confirmed, no one can alter or undo it (iii. 15).[2] Much less, we may depend upon it, did God mean the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years after the promise, to disannul His covenant. The promise of the inheritance

[1] Beyschlag, *N.T. Theol.* ii. 124–125.

[2] Ramsay alleges that irrevocability was a characteristic feature of Greek law which the South Galatians would well understand. Cf. *Hist. Comm.* pp. 351 sqq. A second Will might be made adding to the first and confirming it, but not revoking it, after it had been registered. It is questionable, however, whether he has proved this quite convincingly. Moreover, it seems to miss the point. The question is not whether a testator could revoke his Will, but whether any other person could make it void. The intervention ruled out is that of the Law, regarded as given, not by God, but by angels acting through Moses.

moves straight on from Abraham, in a definite and unbroken line, to find its fulfilment in Christ, the true "seed" of Abraham.[1] And it may also be pointed out, that the Law is not only subordinate in point of time, it is inferior in origin. God Himself is not regarded as giving it directly. It came indirectly, ordained by angels, who used Moses as a mediator. The very fact of his being a mediator, shows that Moses was acting for many (*i.e.* for angels) and not for God, for a single person does not need a mediator.[2]

4. But the question will be asked, If all this is true, then what is the use of the Law? What purpose has it served? If it be antagonistic to the promise, is not its revelation entirely stultified? To this the Apostle gives a most significant and paradoxical reply: I do not say the Law is against the promise; God forbid. I have a reverence for the Law, though it be not of the kind entertained by some of you.[3] The Law came subordinate to the promise, but most helpful to it. How? Because it came "for transgressions." You say it came for the sake of righteousness. I say rather, it came for the sake of sin. Let us understand. By the giving of commandments a great step is taken in moral development. The sense of sin is awakened and intensified when the soul is made conscious of transgressions. A man scarcely condemned

[1] The founding of an argument on the use of the singular instead of the plural number, seems at first sight rather too strained. It is not so surprising, however, if we keep in mind Paul's constant view of Christ, as, not a mere man, but the Head and Representative of all the children of God. Cf. Pfleiderer, Hibbert Lectures, pp. 126–127. Ramsay thinks that he was using a kind of distinction quite customary in Greek thought long before and long after he wrote. *Hist. Comm.* pp. 355–356.

[2] Paul was trained as a Rabbi, and he cannot throw off a certain inclination to argue in some ways as a Rabbi might. What he says of the origin of the Law is in conformity with accepted Jewish tradition of his day. Cf. also Stephen's speech, Acts vii. 38, and the Epistle to the Hebrews ii. 2. It is said that there are no less than three hundred different interpretations of this difficult verse, Gal. iii. 20.

[3] "Paul's whole life was a struggle about the Law, but never against it. He stands for it even when he opposes it" (Adolph Zahn, *Das Gesetz Gottes nach der Lehre des Apostel Paulus*, p. 81).

himself when there was no Law. He must condemn himself now. Every day the knowledge of his inability and failure is thrust upon him. Conscience is quickened, and life, if it be earnest, becomes a burden, bowed down with vain regrets. And what is the purpose served? The soul is completely shut up to God's way of salvation. In a word, it is driven to Christ. Do not say, therefore, that I make the Law of no effect. Without the lightnings of its condemnation, we should never have turned so eagerly to our divine Refuge. Let me use a figure. It is a "schoolmaster," that is, a *pædagogus*, not a teacher but a guardian, a faithful slave; according to the Greek custom, its function is to lead the children to the true Master, yea, even to bring them to Christ. It has accomplished this by its bonds. But once in the keeping of the Master, the children no longer need the assistance of the slave.

5. In the fourth chapter Paul strives to make this subordinate and temporary character of the Law still more apparent. He takes another analogy from common life. A child, even though he be an heir, is under tutors and governors, until the father is pleased to free him from such bonds. Even so, the era of the Law was an era of tutelage. The hour of emancipation came with Christ, when the rudiments and restraints passed away. The work of redemption means, bringing us out of an unworthy subjection into the liberties of sonship. These liberties are the privileges, not limited but full and complete, of the adopted sons of the divine Father. Who, having reached that glad estate, would desire to return to the "weak and beggarly elements," the material and sensuous bondage of the Law? Yet that was the issue to which they were being led, in their new scruples of "days, and months, and times, and years."

It should be observed that sonship by adoption, though alien to Jewish conceptions, was a well-known principle both in Greek and Roman life, and was so absolute that it did not appear in the Apostle's eyes in any way inferior to natural sonship. Sonship of either kind carried heirship with it, and so his readers would understand. It seems to Paul a happy illustration of the blessed change effected by

the gospel, in leading from a state of legal bondage into one of liberty. It is only an illustration, however, and we must not push it to an extreme, as if Paul believed that men were in no sense sons of God before their salvation, or that after their salvation they became sons only by a kind of legal fiction. Sons they are; though, unredeemed by Christ, they are in a sad plight, scarcely to be distinguished from slavery—"in nothing differing from slaves" (iv. 1). The Apostle's aim is simply to show, in a graphic way, that through Christ the Christian passes as it were from the tyranny and misery of a bad home, where he had no liberty or joy, into a new home, under a gracious Father, where love and freedom are complete, and where all high privileges, dignities, and duties, become his, as surely as if he had been born to them and never lost them.

The vivid realisation, then, of the Galatian backsliding, now leads the Apostle into a momentary digression (vv. 11–20). He trembles for his converts, lest his labour among them should be in vain. His love for them springs to the surface, and his language grows more tender. He and they are "brethren," although evil tongues would represent him as their "enemy." How could they dream of enmity in him? Had they ever injured him, so as to rouse his resentment? Far from it. He cannot recall their kindness without gratitude and emotion. His sad "trial in the flesh" had been no barrier to their affection. They had not despised him for it. As a strong friend would pour his life-blood into the veins of the beloved sick, even so they, had it been possible, would have plucked out their eyes, and given them to him. Was that likely to make him their foe? Or, is enmity proved because he has dared to speak the truth? The truth may pain, but it is a high token of friendship to be faithful. But the real cause of any threatened breach between them, is the miserable intrigue of those who trouble them. These men wish to awaken zeal, and it is good to be zealous always in a good cause. The misfortune now is, that their cause is evil. Would that he were with his friends at this moment! How he yearns for them, as he realises the

ordeal they are enduring! They are his "little children." His anxiety is quick and sharp, like the pain of bringing them to birth again, even to the new life in Christ.

Once more returning to his argument, Paul seems to feel that something must be added to what he has said about sonship and heritage. Is it really open to doubt who are the true sons? Do any dare to cast it in the face of the Gentile converts, that they are by nature inferior to the children of Abraham after the flesh? It is true the Jews are such children, but everything in the Law is not just what it seems on the surface. The Law is spirit as well as letter. It is full of allegory and symbol, dim shadow pointing to the abiding substance. Let them remember—for they hear it read frequently—that Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. And let it be granted that the son of the slave-woman is a slave. But ask now, which genealogy really represents the Jews, and which the Christians? Not what you think literally, from the order of natural generation, or what certain interested ones may tell you. Ishmael was the son of the bondwoman, Isaac the son of the free. But while Hagar represents in reality the covenant of Sinai, and the legislation that flowed from it, Sarah and her child of promise represent the heavenly Jerusalem, and all those who come to the promise by being born of the Spirit. They are the truly "free." But the hand of Ishmael was ever against his brother, and so the harassing which is now endured from the earthly Jerusalem was foreshadowed. Yet something more was also prophesied in the symbol, namely, that the bondage should be cast off, and that the heirs of promise should freely enter on their inheritance. This is what is taking place in the dispensation of the gospel. The future is with us, says the Apostle triumphantly, for we are the children of the free.

In this daring illustration, Paul goes, quite logically, to an extreme, in showing that the gospel superseded the Law. He has vision to see that the distinctive sphere of the 'circumcision' cannot be maintained. Jewish as well as Gentile Christians, will become free. Controversy has

perhaps betrayed him into a certain harshness of presentation, but he presents the truth. He expects, however, that Israel will yet inherit her promises through Christ. She will not always be "outcast." Her glorious inclusion will be his theme later, in the Epistle to the Romans.

Such was the masterly and strenuous way, in which Paul strove to maintain the truth of his message, and its harmony with Scripture. It may be granted that there are modes in his reasoning which are apt to seem more ingenious than convincing. Yet in the heart of the matter, he was invincibly right. The Law is impossible as a way of salvation, and that simply because no human flesh can keep it in perfection. Even in that part of his argument which to the Jewish ear would sound most scandalous, he undoubtedly touched the core of a great spiritual truth. No Jew would ever allow that Paul's view of the purpose of the Law—that it was sent for transgression—was a scriptural view.[1] There is no hint of such a thing in its enunciation, or in the interpretation and experience of later ages. It was expressly given for fulfilment and "life," and no one suspected anything else. And so far Paul agreed. None knew better than he, that there were good men in Old Testament times, but what he was also sure of was, that the essence of their goodness did not lie in legal obedience. Neither Abraham nor David would have claimed acceptance with God on that ground. In making such a conviction clear, he may seem to flout the Law, while he yet recognises that the fault is not in the Law, but in the heart of man himself. The Law in itself was good, and if life had been possible by any Law, this assuredly was the Law that would have secured it. But the Apostle is engaged in a polemic, not against abstract theories, but against the concrete realisation of things as it existed around him. It was this that made his language stronger and narrower[2] than it would otherwise have been.

[1] Cf. Ed. Grafe, *Die paulinische Lehre vom Gesetz*, pp. 13 sqq.

[2] Narrow, that is, in so far as it omits any direct and express recognition of the soul of good possible even in the rites of the Law. These were symbols that, in their deepest and purest intention, might lead to spiritual

He seems undoubtedly to be thinking more of the ritual than of the moral side of the Law, although he draws no distinction; and it was the awful hollowness of the Pharisaic legalism of his day that loomed in his mind, and harrowed his soul. He had been a Pharisee, and he knew. His neck had been fretted in that yoke. Hence his revolt was so decided, and his welcome of the liberty of faith so full of joy.

A modern instance presents us with an exact parallel, and helps us to understand the situation. Luther was like-minded with Paul in his revolt from "works of the Law," and for a very similar reason. "We ought never to allow ourselves to forget that they were altogether special circumstances which led Luther so unweariedly to proclaim the comfort of troubled consciences in the good news of justification through Christ. It arose from the circumstance that Luther had pursued so long and so passionately the opposite course of seeking to make himself just with God through the merit of his ascetic (and therefore not even socially profitable) works. From his recollection of the energy with which he had sought to carry out this error of his monkish life, Luther derived a great part of that persistency, which he showed in laying so frequent and urgent stress on the consolation of the gospel and the method of its appropriation." [1]

So it was with Paul. In point of fact, though he argues back upon Scripture, Paul had not himself reached his standpoint by such reflections. These reasons came afterwards. He flashes back upon the Law the light of the great experience through which God had brought his own soul. His view of the purpose of the Law arose from the conviction, that what the Law had actually accomplished was what God had intended it to accomplish—a safe inference in this instance, no doubt, though not necessarily or universally safe. And what had it accomplished?

ideas, types pointing to great antitypes. This view was not foreign to Paul's mind (cf. Col. ii. 17), but he doubtless felt that the point of such an argument was scarcely sharp enough for his present purpose.

[1] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, i. 163.

In his own case—how bitterly he realised it!—it had produced a sense of unworthiness, an intensification of guilt and sin, that made life a burden, and crushed it with a daily sorrow. That was its outcome. Did he dare too much when he ventured to say, God meant it so to be? Verily the Law was a minister of God. It was the slave who compelled him gladly and blessedly to anchor the hope of his salvation in the faith of Christ.

III. We now come to the third and last part of the Apostle's defence. He claimed not only that his gospel was divinely inspired, and in harmony with Scripture, but also that it was the true way of attaining a holy life. His opponents professed to attack him in the interests of morality. He had declared there was a danger of Pharisaism in the Law; they retorted that there was a greater danger of libertinism in his gospel.

Men are always glad to hear the utterance of the word 'liberty.' There is music in the sound. But many welcome it who do not understand it. They interpret it in an absolute way, and turn it to the grossest abuse. This is true of political liberty, and no less true of spiritual. The taunt was flung at the Apostle: 'You go about preaching liberty from the Law; you will soon discover to what that leads. It is just what men of loose life desire. Your liberty will be the most welcome thing in the world—to the libertine.'

This was a serious charge, and Paul felt it. It was fatal, if only it were true. A doctrine cannot survive, if it be convicted of tending to immorality. No matter with what enthusiasm it is preached, or with what skill it is maintained, should its practical results be demoralising, it must fail, and pass out of men's regard. It cannot be from above, if its fruits are plainly from beneath.

Now the Apostle did not attempt to deny the danger. He confessed it, not because there was any inherent defect in the truth of Christian liberty, but because the human heart might abuse it.

As a matter of fact it was misunderstood. Even in the Apostle's lifetime, sects of a Gnostic type arose, who

seized this doctrine of liberty, and used it as an excuse for the most vicious sensual indulgence. Carnal things, they said, were indifferent; these could not taint their lofty spiritual life. We shall see this coming out very clearly in the Epistle to the Colossians, and subsequent history furnishes us with many examples. We may compare the fanatical licence of the Gnostic Carpocratians in Alexandria in the second century, and of the Anabaptists of Münster under John of Leyden in the sixteenth. A similar perversion also characterised the morality of many of the Greek Stoics and Cynics. "Generally the wise man, who bears within him the consciousness of his god-like nature and righteousness, is placed above all human law and custom. And so the rigorism of the Stoic morality strikes into the most unbounded caprice of the individual. The wise man is to himself the law of the good; whilst he follows his nature, he follows the divine reason. In one word, there is no human law objective to him and independent of him. With him the end rectifies the means; what he does is good and perfect, for the reason that he does it. . . . On this ground he can allow himself in everything, reconcile himself to law and custom, or set them aside."[1]

In Paul's day and since, men have argued that if grace "sets free from the Law," it is of no importance if we do not keep the obligations of the Law. Conscience may sit easy, for faith in Christ will rectify every transgression. We do not understand the human heart, if we think this fallacy so obvious that it would not deceive even a little child. Full-grown men can argue worse than children when it suits them. "In all ages," writes Martensen, "men may be found in the Church who imagine that they can sin because of grace, that they can permit themselves transgression and neglect, because the forgiveness of sin always stands open, and it is not deeds, but *faith*, on which our safety turns. As one example among many, we quote the following piece of reasoning, which is

[1] Döllinger, *Gentile and Jew*, i. 356–357.

not imaginary, and in various forms repeats itself in actual life:—'God has remitted to me an infinite debt, has forgiven me all my sins. Then He may certainly also forgive me the five rix-dollars which I owe N. N., and which it is inconvenient for me to pay. I don't intend to pay them, although N. N., who looks at things from the standpoint of the law, and as a Philistine and a matter-of-fact man, priding himself on his social uprightness, constantly importunes me for the money. But if the Lord forgives me this trifling debt,—and that of course He will, since He has forgiven me the infinitely great one,—I do not concern myself about what the children of this world call obligations.'"[1]

Further, it is frequently argued: 'The gospel emancipates; it sets free from the terror of tyrannous laws, and gives us liberty to live out our own lives, to obey the impulses and natures God has given us.' This claim is vaunted as a noble thing, and far in advance of the views of common people, who are ridden by the standards of common morals. It is exhibited in many modern dramas, and runs like a polluting stream through the pages of many modern novels. Worst of all, it is the tacit claim of many a headstrong and unhappy life, which discovers the mocking sophistry only too late. A man frequently says within himself: 'My nature is as God made it; to obey it, therefore, cannot be the hideous thing which some would have me believe.' But he does not reflect,—Is it clean and pure, just as if it had come straight from the hand of God? Is it strong, angelic, and incapable of evil? Is it not tainted in any degree? Are its judgments never wrong? Are its passions never blind and full of havoc? Yet he would obey it! Claiming to be free, he is in reality making himself one of the saddest of slaves.

Paul indeed declares (v. 17) that there is a dualism of a moral kind in our human life. There is a conflict, like that of a house divided against itself. The 'flesh' and the 'spirit' strive against each other for the mastery,

[1] *Christian Ethics* (General Part), pp. 386–387.

the one swaying to evil, the other to holiness. In this he is not philosophising, but simply depicting experience, his own primarily, and that of all earnest men as well. Even before a man is a Christian he knows something of this, and afterwards he knows it still better. The new spirit bestowed upon him, intensifies rather than diminishes the conflict, although at the same time it brings the glorious assurance that the victory of good is more certain. Do not let us mistake. Paul does not regard the 'flesh' as essentially evil. Greek psychologists argued so, but the Christian Apostle does not. In speaking of the flesh he is rather warning us where sin works, than speculating as to where it originates. The flesh, as well as the mind, came originally from God, and by divine grace the Christian is capable of cleansing it from all defilement (2 Cor. vii. 1). But it is regarded as the foe of holiness, because it is the principal seat of corruption in fallen humanity, and the chief sphere in which sin manifests itself; and this, not as its normal state, but as something abnormal, and to be deplored, resisted, overcome. The last thing in the world that Paul would have dreamt of, would have been to counsel any man to yield to the dictates of the carnal nature. Whatever the liberty of Christ meant, it was not liberty to let this side of life have free play.[1]

The Apostle, then, is perfectly alive to the abuse that may be made of his doctrine. He earnestly exhorts the Galatians to be on their guard, and not to use their liberty

[1] Holsten, Lüdemann, and some others, maintain that Paul does hold the Hellenistic idea of the essential sinfulness of the 'flesh.' A brief but instructive criticism of such a theory may be found in Gifford's *Romans*, pp. 48–52. Cf. Rom. vii. 14, where "the opposing principle is Sin, and the flesh is only the material medium of sensual impulses and desires. This is St. Paul's essential view, of which all else is but the variant expression," Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, p. 181. Cf. also Dickson's *St. Paul's Use of the Terms Flesh and Spirit*; Weiss, *Bib. Theol. of the N.T.*, i. 339–351; Beyschlag, *N.T. Theol.*, ii. ch. ii.; Reuss, *Christian Theology*, ii. 23 sqq.; Weizsäcker, *Apost. Age*, i. 151 sqq.; Hausrath, *Paulus* (ed. 1872), p. 148; Kabisch, *Die Eschatologie des Paulus*, 115 sqq.; Clemen, *Die christliche Lehre von der Sünde*, pp. 188 sqq.; Teichmann, *Die paulin. Vorstellungen von Auferstehung und Gericht*, pp. 41 sqq.; Theo. Simon, *Die Psychologie des Apostels Paulus*, pp. 15 sqq.

"as an occasion to the flesh" (v. 13). Never let them imagine that the gospel is content with a lower standard of life than the Law. Rather, the aim of the gospel is to secure the highest. To say the contrary would be to deny the perfect goodness of the Lord Jesus Himself. The goal which the Master sought, in His life and example, in His death and passion, was the redemption from all sin. Without *that*, salvation has no meaning. If sin be ignored and iniquity still indulged, the Apostle solemnly declares and reiterates that there can be no entrance into the kingdom of God (v. 21). "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Paul's divergence from his opponents, it is clear, is not as to righteousness, but as to the way of attaining it; not as to the necessity of good works, but as to the source from which they most certainly spring. The Jewish Christians counselled that the Mosaic Law, with its commandments and ordinances, should be continued in order to supplement the Cross, to help the believer to attain the ideal life. Paul rejected this with his whole strength. For one thing he did not believe the proposal was sincere (vi. 12–13); for another, he was perfectly sure it would be futile, and that from point to point the Christian would be drawn back to the whole intolerable bondage, which the Jews themselves had not been able to endure.

What, then, is the more excellent way to which he points?

1. First of all, he would have the Christian to apprehend what it really means "to be in Christ Jesus." The secret lies there. Union with Christ is not for justification and pardon merely; it is for holiness also. It is not only for one supreme moment, and for one particular gift; it is for ever, and for everything. No man has ever really been united to Christ, who understands it otherwise. We are 'in Christ' in order to live like Him and by Him. He is Master, and His will is our law. Yes,—law. So far the contention is right. It is impossible to live without law. All the universe is bound by law. Nature would be a crashing chaos, and human nature overwhelmed

in anarchy without it. The soul of the Christian must bow to it. Not, however, the law of external commandments, but the law of the spirit of life; principles binding, not because they are parts of a code, but because they are written in the heart. Paul calls this the "law of Christ" (vi. 2). The authority of Christ rises in majesty before him. Every expression of the perfect mind of Christ, in word or deed or revelation of the Spirit, is law to the Christian. It leaves no part of his life uncovered. It searches into every motive and desire, down to the very roots of his being. Take it by itself, and in our own strength, and we will find such a law unattainable, the hardest of all laws, because it is the highest and the holiest. Take it, however, in the way Christ gives it, and we find, not in a moment but in time, that its commandments are a yoke that is easy, and a burden that is light.[1]

2. For how does Christ give His law to His disciples? Not by itself alone. If He did, that would be the end. He gives it, first of all, with a new heart. This is all-essential, making both circumcision and uncircumcision seem of no moment—the new heart as His own creation (vi. 15), without which obedience would never be possible—a mysterious change by the Spirit at the very springs of life. Then further (and of this Paul at the moment is thinking most), it is the gracious mission of the Spirit to strengthen and inspire. He does not leave us alone. Therefore, "Walk in the Spirit," says the Apostle, that is, obey His impulses, suffer His direction and control, seek His ends, walking with Him because you are agreed with Him, "and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

Herein Paul is not teaching anything mystic and esoteric. He is applying a most familiar principle. He simply means that it is obedience to the law of the higher, which sets free from the bondage of the lower. It is as if a man should cease to creep, because he has learnt to walk; as if he should cease to walk, because he has learnt

[1] Cf. an interesting passage on "Union with Christ," in Sanday's *Conception of Priesthood*, pp. 169–170.

to soar in the unclouded light of heaven. It means cherishing good in order to eliminate evil—the only sure mode that the world has ever known: "imprinted on Egyptian monuments of unknown antiquity, and maintained by Chinese moralists before the time of Confucius."[1] It enables a man to say: 'I am not now tempted by that vice, for I have no delight in it; it has lost hold upon me, since I became occupied with nobler things; the glow, the enthusiasm, and the joy of the new life have driven out the passions of the old, just as the withered and persistent leaves of winter are shaken off by the rising sap and bursting buds of spring.'

3. Above all, the man who is "in Christ" will realise that the deepest principle in the new life is Love (v. 13–14). Hereby faith works for holiness, and the "whole law," even in its moral aspects, may be fulfilled. For you cannot kill if you love; nor can you covet or bear false witness. Where love is, injury, and sin, and wrong, will vanish away. They cannot live in its sight. They will never be entertained by its heart, or executed by its hand. The bulwark of all righteousness is love. All errands of mercy and benevolence, all burdens of forbearance and meekness (vi. 1, 10), are inspired by it. It makes men and women stand firm when all lesser motives fail. It seeks the lost to the ends of the earth; it stoops over the fallen and the weak; it has compassion for the oppressed; it battles for the wronged. There is nothing that makes humanity so radiant, so like God. The religion, therefore, that inspires it can never be the foe of goodness. All morality lies clustered in its heart. To have it, is to "dwell at the very fountain-head of perfect life," where Christ Himself is the source. He best fulfils the Law who says, not 'I obey because I fear to transgress,' but 'I obey because the love of Christ constraineth me.'

It is impossible to turn from this great Epistle, without feelings of deep reverence and gratitude towards the man

[1] E. Caird, *Evolution of Religion*, i. 202.

who wrote it. There is much in it that may seem obvious to us now. Yet what Paul strove against was a stupendous danger, which sprang indeed not from passing but from permanent tendencies of the human heart. Most of all should we admire the courage with which this heroic soul, almost single-handed, and at the cost of unbounded suffering and persecution, fought the good fight of faith. It is easy to sail the track that has been sailed ten thousand times. It is not easy to launch away first into the unknown deep. Yet we behold Paul breaking resolutely with an old and venerated past, while the gospel of complete salvation by faith in Christ was yet unproved.

> "He was the first that ever burst
> Into that silent sea."

Not one in millions would have dared so sublime a venture. He apprehended with the vision of genius, nay, of inspiration, the perfect mind of Christ, and he was willing to lay down his life, that the "liberty of Christ" might be handed on in triumph to mankind. For this he is entitled to be ranked as one of the greatest religious leaders of the world.

# THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

Some four years before this Epistle was written the Apostle Paul had sailed round from Athens, and first set foot in the city of Corinth. It was a wonderful city then, though it presents such a miserable appearance to modern eyes. It had long been sinking into decay, when the Greek war of Liberation against Turkey completed its downfall, and left it a mere heap of smouldering ruins. Mr. Lewin visited it in 1851, and counted only some forty or fifty wretched houses, a picture of utter desolation. Since that day, though devastated by earthquake in 1858, it has considerably improved, and is now a town of about seven or eight thousand inhabitants. But all traces of its former glory have been swept away. Wherever else one may find the famed Corinthian pillars, it is not in Corinth. Only a few massive Doric columns still stand like silent monuments of the mighty past. Beyond these, and earth and sea and sky, there is nothing on which we can say the eyes of the Apostle rested.

Within times not very remote from the Christian era, Corinth had come through strange vicissitudes. In the year 146 B.C. Rome had found it necessary finally to subjugate Greece. The fair old land of sages and poets, of gods and heroes, had her neck put under the iron heel. Corinth was one of the cities that suffered most severely. Its defences were completely destroyed, and its almost fabulous wealth became the loot of the Roman soldiers. Its marbles, its statues, its pictures, and all the gold and

silver ornaments of its luxury and pride, were plundered to decorate the walls and gardens of the Roman villas. Fire completed the destruction which a ruthless rapacity had begun. Ancient Corinth, so celebrated for its riches and its navy, and so notorious for its ineradicable vice, was left an unsightly mass of blackened ruins. Thus it remained, in mourning and ashes, for a hundred years.

The strategic position, however, was too obviously important, for Rome to leave unused. In the year 46 B.C. Cæsar gave orders for the re-building of Corinth, and portioned it out among a strong colony of Roman veterans and freedmen. As if by magic, a new and mighty city rose from the plain. When Paul entered it a century later, it was to find it in many ways vieing with, and even excelling, its ancient renown. By that time its population was between six and seven hundred thousand, a large majority of whom were slaves. Its bays were crowded with ships, and its streets swarmed with sailors and merchants, gathered, one might almost say, from every nation under heaven.

Corinth owed its marvellous prosperity, both in the old era and the new, to its splendid natural position. A single glance at the map reveals the secret. The southern part of Greece lies like a mulberry leaf on the sea. It is almost an island, What connects it with the mainland is the narrow strip of land called Isthmus—*the* Isthmus which has given its name to all others, and which at its narrowest point is only four miles across. On the opposite sides of the Isthmus lie two magnificent bays, the one stretching out its arms to welcome the commerce of the East, the other to embrace the navies of the West. On the broadening south end of the Isthmus rose the city of Corinth, not more than two hundred feet above the level of the sea; and behind it, protecting it, like a giant sentinel, and not it alone but all Achaia which lay beyond, the 'tower-capp'd Acropolis,' rising more than eighteen hundred feet, precipitous, and almost inaccessible, abrupt from the plain, like Gibraltar from the sea, and crowned on its summit by a castle and a temple of Venus,

emblems of the strength and weakness of the ancient city.

From the brow of this hill was to be obtained one of the most interesting views in Europe. At one's feet there stretched the noisy streets, the markets, the temples, the statues; the black cypress trees of the cemetery, and the pine groves whose branches were used for the garlands of the victors in the Isthmian games. On the Isthmus itself were the shrine of Neptune, and the long straight Stadium, where every third year the games were held, which all the world came to see, and over which all Greece went demented. To right and left lay the famous seaports, to the nearer of which the city was joined by a strong protecting wall; and, from sea to sea, especially at that narrow part where Nero was soon[1] to cut the first sod of his never-completed canal, went on an incessant traffic—ships rolled across on wheels to avoid the stormy passage round the cape, or, when such transit was not possible, having their cargoes carried over in huge bales by innumerable gangs of porters, beasts of burden, and great lumbering wagons. When the eye was weary of gazing on these busy scenes, and was lifted to look away over the sparkling blue seas, it beheld on the one hand the jutting promontories and rugged hills of the Bay of Corinth, and on the other the horizon enclosed by the snow-clad heights of Thessaly, and nearer, only some five and forty miles away, clearly glancing in the sun's rays, that other rock, even more renowned than this of Corinth, the Acropolis of Athens.

So fair and mighty was the city of Corinth when Paul entered it long ago. Yet we may linger too much on these things. For whatever Paul was, he was no mere pilgrim in search of the picturesque.[2] He was not attracted

[1] A.D. 66 or 67.

[2] "It is a curious fact," says Professor Fisher, "that the relish for wild and romantic scenery, especially mountainous scenery, is of recent origin. It seldom appears in the literature of antiquity, or of the middle ages. It is not until the eighteenth century that this taste manifests itself to any considerable degree. The changed feeling, as contrasted with times previous, on this subject, may almost be said to date from Rousseau. Ruskin has called attention to the remarkable difference between modern and ancient

to Corinth by its natural beauty, nor yet by its commercial greatness. He was attracted by the throbbing human life within its walls, a life on whose shoreless, fathomless sea he longed to launch himself, to prove the power of his gospel as the redeeming grace of God.

It was a bold and perilous venture. Never, humanly speaking, did a task seem more hopeless and quixotic, the most forlorn of all forlorn hopes.[1] To evangelise Corinth! gay, self-satisfied, worldly, dissolute Corinth! a city in which all the brutality of the West and all the sensuality of the East met and were rolled into one. It was a task somewhat like that which Gordon faced when he rode alone over the desert, into the vast provinces of the Soudan, to put down slavery. "Ah," he cried, "you might as soon try to take the stains out of blotting-paper as to remove slavery from these lands. It is like putting your hand over a spring. The moment you remove your hand the water just wells up again."

Of religious life in Corinth, as we understand the words, there was, beyond perhaps the narrow bounds of the Jewish colony, literally none. Of the cult of Aphrodite Pandemos, Oriental rather than Greek in its obscene celebrations, there was too much. A witty writer has compared the city to an amalgam of Newmarket, Chicago, and Paris.[2] It had the worst features of each, all mixed together. At night its streets were hideous with the brawls and lewd songs of drunken revelry. In the daytime its markets and squares swarmed with Jewish pedlars, foreign traders, sailors, soldiers, athletes in training, boxers, wrestlers, charioteers, racing-men, betting-men, courtesans, slaves, idlers and parasites of every description—a veritable pandemonium! Even in that old world the evil name of the

feeling in this particular" (*Beginnings of Christianity*, p. 65 n.). Cf. Friedländer's *Sittengeschichte*, ii. 188 sqq. : Die Reisen der Touristen 7. (*c*). Das Interesse für Natur. Also, Shairp's *Poetic Interpretation of Nature*, chs. ix., x.

[1] See the appended note (p. 146) from Milman's Bampton Lectures, on the difficulties that would confront the missionary in those large Eastern cities. Cf. also an interesting passage in the *Life of James Martineau*, pp. 148–9.

[2] Baring-Gould, *A Study of St. Paul*, p. 241.

city was proverbial. To accuse a man of "behaving as a Corinthian" was to accuse him of leading a low, shameless, and immoral life. It is said that no Corinthian name celebrated in literature, arts, or philosophy, occurs in all the annals of Greece.

Into this city Paul ventured with his gospel. No wonder he said he approached it with "fear and trembling." No wonder he resolved to cast behind him all words of human wisdom, all mere efforts at enticing speech. With an almost audacious hopefulness, he determined to know nothing in Corinth save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. It was a place in which his work would be tried by fire. If it could abide here, it could abide anywhere. If it could root and win souls here, there was no place on earth so degraded as to be beyond the reach of its redemption. Paul had the full consciousness that in Corinth his missionary cause approached its crisis. Earnest and faithful everywhere, he was tenfold more earnest here. He resolved to cling to the most radical and blessed power he knew. He would triumph by the name of the Crucified alone, and proclaim it through this seething society as the only name given under heaven whereby men must be saved.

It was thus a noble and heroic purpose that burned in the breast of the solitary man as he passed on through the streets of Corinth. And we know from the book of Acts and his own Epistles how he carried it out.

His first business was quietly, and like a sane man, to settle down and occupy himself with his trade. In this way he came into friendly contact with two Jewish Christians, Priscilla and Aquila, who, after the edict of Claudius against the Jews in Rome, had left the Capital to come to Corinth. Like draws to like even in the largest city. Very soon Paul repaired to the synagogue, trying first to succeed among his own brethren, though ere long he was compelled to separate from them in indignation and anger. Turning earnestly to the Gentiles, he made wonderful impressions, and gradually drew around him a little community who were received into the faith. Out of such a

population as we have described, and even very largely from its lowest classes, he made his converts. Month after month sped on, and the cause prospered. He took a special delight in it. It was a work almost peculiarly his own; a spot on which no other had founded; a field where probably no plough save his own had ever drawn furrow. To change the figure again, he was the father of this Christian community, and every member of it seemed to him like his own child.

The inevitable experience, however, soon followed—an outburst of Jewish intolerance. The Jews, led by Sosthenes, haled Paul before the judgment-seat of Gallio, the Roman proconsul. But Gallio was a man of excellent perception. He saw that the dispute was one of Jewish religious law, and that consequently it did not lie within his province. He therefore dismissed it from his court. The Greek rabble was not slow to rejoice that the despised Jews had received so "marked a snub." They took the law somewhat rudely into their own hands, and beat Sosthenes. Gallio appeared to think that no substantial injustice had been done. He winked at it, and that is the meaning of the famous phrase, "he cared for none of these things."

Yet it was significant, if we reflect on it, this meeting face to face of Gallio, the cultured, amiable, and gentle Gallio,[1] and Paul, the eager missionary of Jesus Christ. Gallio, the brother of Seneca, and like him a native of Cordova, represented all that was most characteristic of the polite Roman world of his day, its courage, its courtesy, its culture, its cynical philosophy, its dominance, its proud disdain of all that did not actually belong to itself; and Paul represented a religion that was to turn the Roman world upside down, to change the whole face of its society, to fill its temples, its forums, its camps, to confute its philosophers, and to dethrone its gods. But in Gallio's eyes Paul was only a humble tent-maker, a man who evidently meant no ill, though he were narrow and fanatical, meddling with matters which he would be much wiser to leave alone.

[1] Cf. Hausrath, *Der Apostel Paulus*, p. 323.

He took little notice of the Apostle, probably because he seemed only an artisan, and far beneath his attention. The prejudice involved in the old question, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" was at work, blinding as it always does. Says an acute observer of men: "Gallio was well inspired in declaring himself incompetent to decide a question of heresy and schism; yet even clever men are sometimes most lacking in prevision! It revealed itself later on, that the quarrel of these abject sectaries was the great affair of that century. . . . A strange thing! Behold on the one hand, one of the most intellectual and inquiring of men, and on the other one of the strongest and most original souls of his age, and yet they passed without either affecting the other. . . . One of the things which lead men of the world to make most of their blunders, is the superficial repulsion with which they are inspired by those of a lower social grade or lacking in manners; yet manners are only a matter of form, and those who have none are sometimes found to be in the right. The man of society, with his frivolous disdain, continually passes without knowing it the man who is about to create the future: they are not of the same world; and the common error of people of society is to think that the world in which they move is the only world which exists."[1]

Gallio, however, threw the protecting ægis of Rome over the Apostle at this moment, and no doubt helped to form a precedent for the future. "That which hindereth will hinder." The power of the Empire might be about to pass away, but while it stood, it mercifully stood against the fanatical fury that would have destroyed the faith.

Paul continued a considerable time labouring in Corinth, and seems to have had one strange success, worthy of notice. How it came about we cannot tell; but this Sosthenes who led the persecution and suffered for his pains, is most probably the Christian "brother" whose name stands linked imperishably with the Apostle's at the head of the Epistle.

In the year 52, after eighteen months' joyous and suc-

[1] Renan, *St. Paul*, ch. viii. 223-225.

cessful labour, Paul left this memorable scene. He paid a brief visit to Jerusalem, and then coming round by Antioch and the Galatian Churches, he took up his abode at Ephesus. In that busy city he remained between two and three years, making it a centre for missionary labour, working fruitfully, yet at times enduring the extremity of hardship and persecution.[1] During this sojourn he wrote this Epistle, which was probably borne to its destination by the hand of Titus.[2]

And there was need for it. Even these brief years had brought great changes among the converts in Corinth. The struggle between the infant Church and the world, took place at what seemed irresistible odds. Perhaps the Church had grown too quickly for its strength, and the world looked by far the mightier force of the two. At times it must have appeared as if the converts were to be completely drawn back into the whirling vortex of the paganism from which they had been delivered.

Paul had doubtless very full information of the development of events. Ephesus was not very far from Corinth, and news must frequently have come to his ears. We know that members of the household of Chloe[3] came from Corinth and brought him tidings, and we may believe that, in the constant coming and going between the cities, other friends would arrive, although we have no record of their names. It is most probable also that Paul wrote a letter[4] on the state of existing evils, and received one in reply, both of which are now lost. Then, as his anxiety grew, the Apostle sent Timothy on a mission to the Corinthians with many commendations.[5] Apollos too, the eloquent preacher, who had done so excellently at Corinth, though his efforts there were unhappily misrepresented, had come to Ephesus, and appears to have been on the most

[1] Cf. the touching verses, 1 Cor. iv. 11–13.

[2] Opinion is divided as to the date of the Epistle. The spring of the last year of Paul's sojourn in Ephesus is possible, but the spring of the preceding year seems more likely. See later, on the reconstruction of the interval between 1 and 2 Corinthians, pp. 153–154.

[3] 1 Cor. i. 11. [4] 1 Cor. v. 9. [5] 1 Cor. iv. 17.

friendly terms with Paul. Moreover—and this was the immediate occasion of the Epistle—a letter was received from the Church of Corinth itself, explaining difficulties, and making requests for guidance. This letter was borne by the hands of three faithful friends, Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus,[1] and from them we may suppose a great deal of supplementary information would be gained. Paul's Epistle, therefore, is no drawing of a bow at a venture. It deals with facts of which he had abundant knowledge, and it casts a strong and somewhat lurid light on the state of the Church which he had founded with so much joy.

Briefly the condition of affairs was this. The Apostle's beloved Church had broken into factions, and was divided and rent by party cries. Some of its members were living openly scandalous lives, and courage and fidelity in dealing with them seemed to be lacking. Others had quarrels, which, without even attempting a Christian solution, they brought to an issue by dragging one another into the heathen courts. Great differences and discussions had also arisen with regard to marriage and the social relations generally; with regard to banquets and the eating of food offered to idols; with regard to the behaviour of women in the assemblies, to the Lord's Supper and the love-feasts, to the use and value of spiritual gifts, and even with regard to the hope of the Resurrection.[2]

Paul must have heard and read the news that revealed these things with deep sorrow and sinking of heart. There was much to fill him with grief; there was much also to stir him with indignation. The revelation of so much laxity and disorder was bad, but the complacent self-satisfied tone of the Corinthians was still worse. They were ready to weep, but not for themselves. They were

[1] 1 Cor. xvi. 17.

[2] Weizsäcker thus distinguishes the nine matters to which the Apostle makes specific reference in his Epistle: (1) three main topics introduced by the letter from Corinth itself, namely, marriage, meat offered to idols, and spiritual gifts; and (2) six subjects on which Paul had obtained information by conversation with others—the factions, the case of incest, the lawsuits, the free customs of the women, the abuse connected with the Supper, and the denial of the resurrection. *Apostolic Age*, i. 324–325.

eager to discuss a great many questions in a lofty, intellectual way, without seeming to perceive their real drift, or the life and spirit that lay imperilled at their heart. It was this callous conceit that at once wounded and roused the Apostle. Smitten with disease at the very roots of life, insensible almost to the very rudiments of Christian feeling, the Corinthians perceived not that they were poor, and blind, and naked.

The first impulse no doubt was to hasten to Corinth. It was the simplest thing to do, but it would have been the most perilous both for him and for them. The Apostle was so moved that, coming "with a rod," as he said, he might have come too sorrowfully and severely. The letter therefore was written instead.

It cannot have been an easy thing for Paul to write in a case in which his deepest feelings and convictions were so greatly involved. But difficulties like these make men. Never did the Apostle do better than when he was most tried. This noble Epistle is a witness. It is great in its self-restraint, its strength, its masterly grasp of principles, its keenness and wisdom in their application; calm and full of reason, clear and balanced in judgment. It is very varied in its lights and shadows, in its kindness, its gravity, its irony. Again and again it bursts into passages of glowing imagination. Now it moves with firm tread among the commonest themes, and now it rises, as with the beat of angel's wing, into the loftiest spheres of thought and vision. It rebukes error, exposes and condemns sin, solves doubts, upholds and encourages faith, and all in a spirit of the utmost tenderness and love, full of grace and truth. It is broad in its outlook, penetrating in its insight, unending in its interest and application.

Although he has so wide a field to cover, perhaps just because it is so wide, the Apostle is very orderly in this Epistle, and it is not difficult to follow him as he moves from point to point through its pages. We need not offer a detailed analysis, but only broadly sketch the outline of his thought.

After salutation and thanksgiving, Paul begins by

referring to the internal divisions among the Corinthians, and to those unworthy and misguided party cries that had arisen among them: "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ": offering at the same time an elaborate defence of his gospel ministry, and urging his claims upon them as his "beloved sons," "begotten in Christ Jesus." He boldly speaks of a notorious offender whom they harbour in their midst, though even heathen society would be disgraced by him, and he solemnly orders them to expel him, and to cut him off from the Church. He also points out how unseemly it is for them to hale one another before the heathen courts, when they ought rather to strive to heal their differences quietly among themselves. Such is the first section of the Epistle, occupying six chapters.

In the four succeeding chapters (vii.–x.), Paul explicitly refers to two of the leading subjects raised in the letter from Corinth. Questions regarding marriage he treats with great delicacy and circumspection; careful, however, to distinguish between what he has received as the direct word of the Lord, and what he only delivers as his own opinion, the utterance of his own sanctified common-sense, yet an utterance to which the good spirit within him gives weight. The scruples and casuistries in connection with the eating of meat that has been offered to idols, he also handles with excellent wisdom, and lays down a rule for the Christian conscience of a far-reaching kind, happily expressed: "All things are lawful; but all things are not expedient. All things are lawful; but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbour's good." He finds the solution of many difficulties by lifting them into the clear atmosphere of duty and love. He also in this section makes another notable defence of his apostolic ministry.

Then follows the third part of the Epistle, in five more chapters (xi.–xv.). It deals with errors and defects which have crept into the inner life of the Church. Such have regard, in the first place, to the deportment of women and their veiling in church, a serious enough matter

apparently at that time; then to graver and more disorderly affairs, gross abuses, such as drunkenness and gluttony at the Lord's Supper, in dealing with which the Apostle gives that deliverance regarding the institution, which it is customary to include in the Communion Service. Thereafter he refers to the diversity of spiritual gifts, and to the confusion and jealousy which they raised, obscuring that "more excellent way," the Love which transcends them all, which never faileth, the greatest of Christian graces, whose praise he sings in language of surpassing beauty. He strives also to correct the disorder arising from the abuse of the gift of tongues—their Church, it has been said, was mostly gone to tongue—many desiring to speak at once, and many speaking only a vain babble which no one could understand, thinking themselves specially gifted "the more evidence they gave that they had taken leave of their senses." Next comes the immortal fifteenth chapter on the Resurrection, anchoring the faith, first of all, to the Resurrection of Christ, and then proceeding by reasoning and analogy to brush aside many flimsy objections to the great doctrine of the rising again of them that "sleep in Jesus"; closing with the pæan: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death where is thy sting? O Grave where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Finally, the Epistle closes with kindly exhortations and counsels, and the promise of a visit at a later day.

One outstanding feature of the Epistle is the strong light it casts on the state of that primitive Church, about which we sometimes talk so vaguely and so unwisely. It seems difficult for some to realise that the early Church was but the humble and imperfect beginning of a development, and not the developed thing. There were many excellent things about it, and we are often called on to admire the first fine flush of its enthusiasm, its brave, patient, and heroic spirit. But there is no halo of perfection. To talk of getting back to its life, is simply to talk of what we do not understand. Paul's great endeavour,

his mighty struggle and incessant prayer, was to get it away from its own feeble life, to lift it to a higher level and a purer air.

Nor let us fail to observe the significance of the noble effort of the Apostle to grapple with the difficulties before him, and to follow the evils he saw into all their relations and details. He would leave nothing untouched, no dark corner unillumined, no ill thing unslain. Should we ever be tempted to regard Christianity as a narrow thing, cribbed, cabined, and confined within the petty circle of a few ideas, we should remember this. Consider the multitude of questions that Paul here deals with, questions of common thought, of daily life and experience, of social intercourse and relations, of things to cultivate and things to avoid. Behold the expansiveness of the new faith. It comes to fill, not a part of life, but the whole life; it lays down principles that follow us to our homes, to our most private sanctum there, out again to the world, to the market-place, the place of amusement, the place of temptation, the place of service, of trial, of worship and prayer. And this is all profoundly in harmony with Paul's declaration that he would know nothing among the Corinthians save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. It is a mistake to regard that as a narrow restriction, as if it were exhausted merely by the repetition of a few words. Paul treats it as a large and ever-expanding principle. He maintains his consistency simply because he deals with all these things in the spirit of Christ, and ever brings them to the standard by which the Christ of love and sacrifice would test them. That spirit and standard must follow us through the whole range and experience of our life. If the shadow of the Cross does not fall on us wherever we go, it simply is because we have dwarfed and belittled the Cross. We have not set it on the same eminence as Paul did. With him it towered so high that the shadow it threw covered the whole activities of human life.

There are passages in the Epistle of great doctrinal importance, dealing with the Person of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Lord's Supper; there are also many

luminous verses on the nature of the religious meetings and services of the early Church.[1] Several of these recur as the chief points in later Epistles. Meantime we would indicate three broad practical lessons which the Epistle conveys.

1. In the first place, there is a very earnest warning to the Church against a factious and party spirit. The Corinthians were imbued with the party spirit of Greek democracy, and were infected also by the sporting spirit of the great games that entered so largely into their life. They transferred these things to the Church. They backed their preachers as they did their pugilists and their charioteers. They listened to them with itching ears, not as men who wished to learn, but as partisans who sought occasion either to applaud or to condemn. They were "feather-headed," and probably were not able to detect a straw of difference between the doctrine of Paul or Cephas or Apollos; and even those who took the name of Christ may have done so out of a pride that, affecting to belong to no party, was the most deeply partisan of all.[2]

It was not doctrine, then, that yet divided them, or that now occupied Paul's attention. He and Apollos were pitted against each other as competitive preachers; and yet he and Apollos were even now living together in

[1] Weizsäcker gives an excellent account of these, *Apostolic Age*, ii. 246 sqq.

[2] Many theories have been formed as to the exact significance of this so-called "Christus-party." Cf. Godet's *Introduction*, pp. 250 sqq.; Stanley's *Corinthians*, pp. 29–30; Farrar's *St. Paul*, ch. xxxi.; Pfleiderer's *Paulinism*, ii. 28–31; Weiss' *Introduction*, i. 259–265; Weizsäcker's *Apostolic Age*, i. 325–333, and 354 sqq. Weizsäcker holds that the name, like the other three, indicates the relation of those adopting it to an Authority, and their exclusive claim to its possession. Pfleiderer argues that the name was taken as a party watchword, to bring out the apostolic inferiority of St. Paul as compared with the original Apostles who had enjoyed immediate personal companionship with Christ during His historical life, and that really those who adopted it were essentially identical with the Petrine party. Similarly also Baur, *Paul*, i. 266 sqq. On the other hand, for a defence of the view that the name does not strictly-speaking indicate a party at all, but rather designates those who were disgusted at the display of all party spirit, and with whom Paul was in hearty sympathy, see McGiffert's *Apostolic Age*, pp. 295–297.

perfect amity, minding the same things, furthering the same work. "I planted, and Apollos watered," is not the language which Paul would have used, if there had been any deep and vital distinction between them.

Paul's condemnation, therefore, is directed against division in the Church, which has for its basis only the most paltry personal predilections. It cannot be doubted that such partisanship has frequently wrought great evil to Christianity. It appeals to the lowest elements in human nature, and though any reason for its existence may be of little magnitude, yet it often kindles fires which generations cannot quench. So great estrangement has often arisen where the difference has been unsubstantial, and not easily distinguished by those outside the circle of controversy, that grave scandal has been caused in the eyes of men, and hurtful wounds have been inflicted on the Body of Christ. Lord Bacon, in his own wise way, warns us that "men ought to take heed of rending God's Church by two kinds of controversies. The one is, when the matter of the point controverted is too small and light, not worth the heat and strife about it, kindled only by contradiction. . . . The other is, when the matter of the point controverted is great; but it is driven to an over-great subtilty and obscurity; so that it becometh a thing rather ingenious than substantial. A man that is of judgment and understanding, shall sometimes hear ignorant men differ, and know well within himself, that those which so differ mean one thing, and yet they themselves would never agree. And if it come so to pass in that distance of judgment which is between man and man, shall we not think that God above, that knows the heart, doth not discern that frail men, in some of their contradictions, intend the same thing, and accepteth of both?"[1]

But in his condemnation of party-spirit Paul goes below the surface, and reveals the foundation of all true Christian unity. It must be "in Christ." Other foundation can no man lay. And he who builds upon it, be he

[1] *Essays*: III. Of Unity in Religion.

what he may, and call him what we may, is a Christian builder. High up on the walls of the great cathedrals, beneath the vaults and arches, we may sometimes observe certain quaint and curious marks. They are the marks, sometimes the names, sometimes only the initials, of the masons who worked on the building. All have their share and credit in the noble result, for all wrought to the one great end, and in harmony with the one great design. They were wise builders, not because they indulged in erratic ways of their own, but because, though each did differently, and shaped different parts, they all laboured to glorify the master-work of the master-mind.

Paul's principle, "in Christ," also offers us the solution when we come to division on deeper and more serious things: divergence on doctrine, on the interpretation of the mind of the Spirit, on the final and infallible standard of faith. In the dim human light, deep penetrating differences arise here inevitably. They may be accompanied on both sides of the cleavage with the purest sincerity and the most saintly devotion. And though Paul is not dealing with these things at the moment, his teaching applies. Any unity in such a case, still possible to cherish and maintain, must be a unity in Christ. None can be unchurched who cling to Him. None can be severed from the true and catholic faith, who confess with their lips, and testify with their lives, that He is Lord. Widely as Christians may differ in other things, far apart as they may drift in judgment of what they have honestly tried to see, those can never justly be accused of schism who still cling to the Head. In the great day when God gathers all things into one in Christ Jesus, they will be found in Him, and the common life and brotherhood, which could not be slain, will be revealed.

2. Once more, the Epistle lays down an important rule for the guidance of the Christian conscience.

In matters where the issue is clearly one of the great imperatives, of right or wrong, of purity or sin, the conflict ought never to be long protracted for a truly earnest man. He should see his way. But outside these, there are a

great many other matters that often cause us perplexity and doubt. These are questions that relate to things that do not seem to us to be wrong in themselves; yet their abuse or the offence they give to others, may cause us to debate what ought to be our attitude towards them.

In Corinth, for example, meat offered to idols, and then brought to table, was a stumbling-block to many Christians. They said: 'If we eat this, it is consenting to idolatry; we will not eat it.' But there were some who had risen to a higher level. They perceived that this was a groundless scruple, and they said: 'An idol is nothing at all; there is only one God; the meat, therefore, is really not affected by such a superstition.' Accordingly, their higher knowledge, their clearer and more rational view, gave them liberty to eat if they pleased; their conscience was free.

But was this really all that they, in this larger, saner liberty of theirs, had to consider? Some answer: 'Certainly. Are we to deny ourselves what we find to be harmless, simply because we see a brother who is stupid enough to magnify it into a terror, and to raise the question of conscience where conscience is not involved?' Paul acknowledges that this is the undoubted answer of the law of individual liberty. But it is not the final answer. There has not entered into it a consideration of the mind of Christ. It is scarcely Christian liberty unless it be willing to subject itself to the law of love. Should it be able to indulge itself, without caring whether its indulgence becomes an offence and snare to another soul, it is not the liberty of the Master, who, freest of the free, yet put Himself in voluntary bonds, and pleased not Himself.

It is of great importance to reflect on the liberty which we are sometimes so quick to claim, because we have grown enlightened enough to perceive that some amusement or recreation, or some æsthetic taste or accomplishment, or some common social custom, is a thing that is "lawful," not wrong in itself. This liberty

comes to us always fettered by at least a twofold restriction.[1]

The first is, that we use it so as not to inflict injury upon ourselves. It is an edged tool, and a man may easily turn it inwards. He may pervert liberty to his own hurt. Thus, a thing not wrong to him at the start may become wrong by its excess or absorbing interest, or because of its surroundings, the degradation into which it has fallen, the unhappy associations with which it is wedded. Or, it may be that its indulgence interferes with a nobler and more spiritual ideal, to which his growing life has begun to bow. If he be wise he will say: 'I once could have filled up my time with that. But now I have seen greater things, and I have put it away. It was not wrong, but now it is superseded by loftier pursuits and by holier plans. It has become impossible, simply because it would impede my steps to a higher goal.'

The other restriction is one that springs from regard to our neighbour. It is the restriction inspired by Christian love. It demands that we should forgo our liberty for our brother's sake. True, this demand can never be made absolute. We should remember that it may even be wrong to yield to it. If we did not resist it sometimes, the weak brother would become a tyrannous dictator, and the moral world would be made to stand on its apex rather than on its base. Yielding might be so abused as to confirm a man in his error, and drive him into deeper darkness. It might hinder our own spiritual progress, compromise our surest convictions, at the same time that it merely pandered to his narrowness and folly.

But with this proviso, which love itself dictates, there is still a valid claim made by Christian weakness on our forbearance and our self-denial. Granted that the neighbour is short-sighted and over-scrupulous. That does not quite relieve us. We are still bound to consider him

[1] Of course there are also other restrictions: *e.g.*, a "not expedient" that has reference to the non-Christian world, and a "not edifying" that has reference to the Church at large.

because he is our brother. Christ considered him, and Christ died for him. Dare we say, therefore, weak as we believe him to be, that it matters nothing to us though we offend him, or though we may by our liberty lead him to go beyond his conscience, and thereby grievously to err? Although we see that his scruples are wrong, yet we may not ride over them roughshod. To do so would be to put ourselves wrong even more seriously. And need it be said that if the matter be one, not merely of opinion, but of obvious practical evil, so that the brother is not only wounded in his conscience, but is encouraged by our freedom to pursue what will end for him, and perhaps also for those who are dear to him and dependent upon him, in a maimed and ruined life,—then in such a case the obligation is increased a thousand-fold, earnestly and prayerfully to consider whether the demand upon our love is not now intensified to a degree which we dare not resist? Then, perhaps, we might look in pity and compassion on the wreck and havoc that are wrought, and conscience, not aroused before, might awake now, and we might say like the Apostle: "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth."

3. Finally, there is a third important lesson which this Epistle bequeathes to the Christian world—an evangelical one, namely, that as in Corinth so ever, it is the Cross of Christ which approves itself to be the power and wisdom of God. Behold how it began to move and unsettle, to lift and change from its base, the life of that old heathen world! It was neither Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas, who accomplished that colossal task. It was the preaching of Christ and Him crucified. The Christianity of Corinth and of Europe began with the gospel of the Cross. In Calvary and the open tomb it found the secret and power of its primal life. We shall profoundly mistake if we think it can ever draw away with impunity from these central facts. The river broadens and deepens as it flows, but it is never possible for it to dissever itself from the living fountain from which it springs.

"The name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth . . . neither

is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

"Such is the creed of the Christian Church. With this creed she began; in the faith of it her martyrs have died; and to-day, as eighteen hundred years ago, it is from this creed that she derives her strength."[1]

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NOTE. See p. 130.

The following passage from Dean Milman may be quoted, for the sake of the graphic account it gives of the kind of obstacles encountered by the early missionaries of Christianity on entering the great heathen cities. Whately, in his *Rhetoric*, cites it as an admirable illustration of the aid which a vivid imagination may give to the true understanding of history.

"Conceive then the Apostles of Jesus Christ, the tent-maker or the fisherman, entering as strangers into one of the splendid cities of Syria, Asia Minor, or Greece. Conceive them, I mean, as unendowed with miraculous powers, having adopted their itinerant system of teaching from human motives, and for human purposes alone. As they pass along to the remote and obscure quarter, where they expect to meet with precarious hospitality among their countrymen, they survey the strength of the established religion, which it is their avowed purpose to overthrow. Everywhere they behold temples, on which the utmost extravagance of expenditure has been lavished by succeeding generations; idols of the most exquisite workmanship, to which, even if the religious feeling of adoration is enfeebled, the people are strongly attached by national or local vanity. They meet processions in which the idle find perpetual occupation, the young excitement, the voluptuous a continual stimulant to their passions. They behold a priesthood numerous, sometimes wealthy; nor are these alone wedded by interest to the established faith; many of the trades, like those of the makers of silver shrines at Ephesus, are pledged to the

[1] Harnack, *Christianity and History*, p. 17.

support of that to which they owe their maintenance. They pass a magnificent theatre, on the splendour and success of which the popularity of the existing authorities mainly depends; and in which the serious exhibitions are essentially religious, the lighter as intimately connected with the indulgence of the baser passions. They behold another public building, where even worse feelings, the cruel and the sanguinary, are pampered by the animating contests of wild beasts and of gladiators, in which they themselves may shortly play a dreadful part,

'Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday!'

Show and spectacle are the characteristic enjoyments of the whole people, and every show and spectacle is either sacred to the religious feelings, or incentive to the lusts of the flesh; those feelings which must be totally eradicated, those lusts which must be brought into total subjection to the law of Christ. They encounter likewise itinerant jugglers, diviners, magicians, who impose upon the credulous, and excite the contempt of the enlightened; in the first case, dangerous rivals to those who should attempt to propagate a new faith by imposture and deception; in the latter, naturally tending to prejudice the mind against all miraculous pretensions whatever: here, like Elymas, endeavouring to outdo the signs and wonders of the Apostles; there, throwing suspicion on all asserted supernatural agency, by the frequency and clumsiness of their delusions. They meet philosophers, frequently itinerant like themselves; or teachers of new religions, priests of Isis and Serapis, who have brought into equal discredit what might otherwise have appeared a proof of philanthropy, the performing laborious journeys at the sacrifice of personal ease and comfort, for the moral and religious improvement of mankind; or at least have so accustomed the public mind to similar pretensions, as to take away every attraction from their boldness or novelty. There are also the teachers of the different mysteries, which would engross all the anxiety of the inquisitive, perhaps excite, even if they did not satisfy, the hopes of the more pure and lofty-minded. Such must have been among the obstacles which would force themselves on the calmer moments of the most ardent; such the overpowering difficulties, of which it would be impossible to overlook the importance, or elude the force; which required no sober calculation to estimate, no laborious

inquiry to discover; which met and confronted them wherever they went, and which, either in desperate presumption, or deliberate reliance on their own preternatural powers, they must have contemned and defied" (Bampton Lectures on *The Character and Conduct of the Apostles considered as an Evidence of Christianity*, pp. 269–273).

# THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

On reading this Epistle we soon discover that we are in a very different atmosphere from that of the First. The air is electric. The feeling is strained, intense, and full of passion. The themes have changed. The events referred to are new.

There is no more reference to the questions of casuistry about meats offered to idols. We hear no more of women and their head-dresses in the assembly, of gifts of tongues, of marriage, of the Eucharist, of the Resurrection. These are all for the moment swept into the background, or eclipsed and obscured by something more immediately pressing. True, there is again an offender in this Epistle, as there was in the last; but it is not the same person, and the offence is not the same thing.

Yet there is an obvious connection between the two Epistles. It is not only found in the temptation to fall back into a pagan and sensual life, more than once referred to; for such dangers were perpetual in Corinth, and could scarcely escape notice in a letter earnestly dealing with Corinthian life: it is above all found in reference to the factions which had sprung up within the Church, and to the dispeace which the factious spirit was sure to engender. In the First Epistle Paul blamed the Corinthians for saying, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ." But in that Epistle this evil was little more than threatening. It was only as a cloud no bigger than a man's hand. Now it is a cloud that has rapidly risen

and darkened the whole heavens, and burst into a crashing storm.

There are enemies and deceivers at Corinth, seducing the converts from their allegiance to the Apostle, and from the simplicity of the gospel as he had declared it. They have used every effort of slander and calumny in trying to undermine his influence. They have come into his heritage, a field in which they never laboured, and with the greatest insolence have striven to draw away the hearts of his converts. They were Jews, for his bitterest enemies were, like his Master's, among "his own"; Jews who professed Christianity, and who came bringing letters of introduction and commendation from the Christians of Jerusalem. They poured contempt on him as a man who had no commendation and no authority. They were of the "old religion," but who was he? An upstart of yesterday; isolated, working for his own hand, and designing to make the converts his prey. He was fickle, crafty, untruthful, as even his own letters showed, saying that he would do things which he never did. Moreover, he was a bully and a coward, a contemptible fellow, who wrote great swelling words from a distance, and when he came to hand was "gentle as any sucking dove." Away, he seemed clothed with thunder; among them, his presence was ridiculous, and his speech like that of an imbecile rather than of a sane man.

This party, led by a ring-leader who was ready to go all lengths against the Apostle, had by its very audacity gained the ears of a great many of the less stable Christians. What Paul dreaded was thus taking place. The infant Church, whose only safety lay in union and peace, was like to be wrecked in a storm of discord and strife. It could not endure this. Its life was still too feeble and undeveloped. It was scarcely more than away from the brink of paganism; it might easily be hurled back. Nothing would more surely accomplish its ruin than a spirit that roused envy and passion, that dragged men in a moment from the higher to the lower, from the Christ-like to the Satanic.

It was such a danger that stirred Paul to the depths,

and called him to put forth all his energies. The worst of the storm is indeed past when he writes this Epistle; but we can still see how deeply he was agitated, how keenly he had been stung; what an Atlas-load of misery and dread was removed from him when he thought he could put away fears of the worst; and with what earnestness and force, yea, with what unsparing weapons, he was prepared to fight, if only he could put his enemies to shame, and rescue his beloved converts from their toils.

He succeeded, but it was at great cost. Never had he gone through such a period of tribulation and distress. Never had there fallen upon him such an accumulation of sorrows. It almost seemed as if he must break down under their weight, and as if that bow of finest steel, bent too far, would snap at last. At no period of his history, if we read aright this agitated Epistle, and understand something of the dark background from which it sprang, is our sympathy more deeply awakened for this sensitive and heroic soul, who was ever willing to lay himself upon the altar, to spend and be spent, though the more abundantly he loved the less he was loved, and who, not lightly, but under a pressure of tears and anguish, strove bravely to say, "Seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not."

It would appear that after Paul wrote his First Epistle he received news from Corinth of the zeal with which the enemy was already working against him, and of the anarchy that was likely to ensue. Probably this news was brought by Timothy, who may have reported that the evil had gone beyond his control, and that it needed Paul himself to cope with it. Thus the fear expressed in the First Epistle that he might have to go to Corinth "with a rod," was only too sadly fulfilled.

Suddenly, we may imagine, he left Ephesus, and made with all speed to Achaia. He hoped that his presence would suffice. But he had underrated the strength of the foes he had come to meet, or rather the extent to which they had succeeded in gaining the people. This took him by surprise. The congregation was convened, but Paul,

alas! found himself in a lukewarm environment. The air was cold and chill about him. His friends were fewer than he thought, and not so hearty and decided as he wished. His opponents, on the other hand, put forth all their strength. Their leader made himself specially offensive. Paul was wronged and insulted to his face, and scarcely found a friend with courage enough to take his part. The result was that his mission was a failure. He was unable for the moment to maintain his position. Overwhelmed with grief, and stung by the taunts and jeers of his insolent foe, he left Corinth perhaps as speedily as he entered it.

But he was not beaten, nor did he shake off the dust of his feet against his faithless and ungrateful Church. He believed the lapse was only momentary, that God would yet give him grace and strength to surmount this bitter trial, yea, would make him "mighty to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God."

He returned to Ephesus, and from Ephesus by the hand of Titus he sent another letter to the Corinthians. It is a letter now lost, though it is quite possible we may have distant and surviving echoes of its thunders in the last portion of the present Epistle.[1] Yet strong as this is, the other was stronger. It was a letter of challenge and ultimatum, a letter in which the die was cast. The Corinthians were made to feel that there could be no middle course. They must be more faithful to the man who had been their father in Christ, and they must decide against the emissary who had wronged him. We cannot tell the nature of the pressure he brought to bear upon them, or revive the intensity of the fire he turned upon his foes. The letter is gone, and probably Paul himself would not have been sorry to know that it would soon disappear. It was written, he tells us, in much affliction and anguish of heart, with many tears (ii. 4). It was written with all the force he could summon. It was so vehement that he

[1] But see note below, p. 156.

feared for it, and felt as if perhaps he had passed the bounds. It was no sooner gone than he repented (vii. 8). He began to be nervous about the result, and waited for news of it with anxiety, having "no rest in his spirit" (ii. 13).

It must, however, be acknowledged that the whole subject of the reconstruction of events in the interval between 1 and 2 Corinthians is one of very great difficulty. The data for absolute certainty are unhappily not in our possession. We must be content with the balance of probability. It is quite usual to represent the two Epistles as in intimate and direct relation; thus, it is the reception of 1 Corinthians that Paul is anxious about; it is still the offender of 1 Corinthians that he is dealing with; and the letter to which 2 Corinthians ii. 4 refers, is 1 Corinthians. These opinions seem very improbable. The language of 2 Corinthians ii. 4 is language that could scarcely be applied to the First Epistle, even with the greatest stretch to meet Oriental exuberance and hyperbole. The First Epistle is earnest, grave, and sometimes stern; calm, argumentative, and not seldom exalted; but it would never dawn on any one that it was a letter written with many tears, and much affliction, and anguish of heart, still less that it was one the Apostle could ever have regretted writing. In the second place, Paul could surely never refer to the offender of the First Epistle as a man who by his offence (and by hypothesis nothing else has emerged) had done him personal wrong (ii. 5 and vii. 12); nor could he possibly have passed so lightly over a virtual ignoring of the condemnation which he launched against that offender in the Lord's name, and in the exercise of his full apostolic authority. In the third place, the references to a visit to Corinth, not the first visit of eighteen months' duration, but a sorrowful visit resulting in "distress," a second visit, are too obvious and direct to be explained away. If it be impossible to allow time for both visit and letter between the early spring of the last year of Paul's stay in Ephesus, when it is frequently supposed 1 Corinthians was written, and the autumn of that year when

Paul left Ephesus, then the date of the First Epistle must be regarded as belonging not to the pre-Pentecost period of the year closing Paul's stay in Ephesus, but to that period in the preceding year. This gives ample time for the intervening occurrences, and it is generally allowed that there is no insuperable reason against it. A careful résumé of opinion, and a sifting of results on the whole matter, are given by Principal Robertson in his article on 2 Corinthians in Hastings' *Dictionary*. He believes in the new crisis in Corinth, and in the lost letter intervening between our two Epistles. He rejects, however, the personal visit by the Apostle, though on grounds that do not, in our judgment, seem to be very conclusive. Weizsäcker in his *Apostolic Age*, and Sabatier in his Note to the English edition (1893) of his *Apostle Paul*, appear most intelligently to reconstruct the history.

To resume: we conceive Paul waiting in deep anxiety for news from Corinth. But he did not receive that news in Ephesus. There he experienced sorrow upon sorrow. His long labours were suddenly interrupted by a wild tumult and threatening of death. Demetrius the silversmith, as we know from the book of Acts, appealed to the passions of his fellow-tradesmen, and roused the worst elements of the mob against the new religion. The Apostle had to flee from Ephesus, probably in danger of his life.

He went to Troas. There he hoped he would meet with Titus. He waited long, but Titus never came. He preached, and God blessed his preaching, and opened a door for him. Yet even the love of preaching deserted him. He could not be at rest. Had his heart been opened at that moment, one word would have been found stamped upon it, and that word was 'Corinth.' He left Troas, and came on to Macedonia. There it was, perhaps in Philippi, perhaps in Thessalonica, that his messenger met him.

What a load God then lifted from his heart! What tribulation he had endured! and how a touch of the merciful Hand dispelled it! His letter had been successful. It had administered the check, and wrought the

change he desired. The hearts of the Corinthians had again turned to him. True, he had wounded and grieved them. His words had been like goads in their side. But they were the faithful wounds of a friend. Such sorrow was a godly sorrow, for it turned to repentance. They had obeyed his word. The offender had been made to feel the weight of their displeasure. And yet they had not cast him off altogether, a gracious decision in which the Apostle himself hastened to concur.[1]

So far Titus' news had been favourable, and no doubt his own tact and fidelity deserve their meed of praise in this result. Yet he could not hide from Paul the fact that some of the Judaising party still remained in Corinth, who would be disagreeable if they could.[2] Power for the moment had been wrested from their hands. It would do good, however, if the congregation were further enlightened as to their true character, and once more put on guard against their insidious activity.

And so, under the impression made upon him by this report of Titus, Paul sat down to write the present Epistle, associating Timothy with him, and sending Titus back with it to Corinth.

The Epistle extends over thirteen chapters, and divides itself into two distinct parts by a middle portion (viii. and ix.) relating to the Collection for the poor Saints at Jerusalem. But one clear purpose dominates the whole Epistle, and that is to explain and defend his apostolic authority.

In the first seven chapters this defence is set forth, with numerous digressions, in a very earnest but loving and tender style, appealing to the majority of the Church in Corinth, who have now signified their revived attach-

[1] Ch. ii. 6, however, indicates that there was a minority who thought that the offender should be more severely dealt with. In an interesting review of this passage, Dr. J. H. Kennedy makes out that these men were zealous friends of the Apostle, who might be described as "ultra-Paulinists," and whom Paul himself earnestly counsels to moderation and forgiveness. *Second and Third Corinthians*, pp. 102 sqq.

[2] Dr. Sanday thinks this the Christus-party. *Ency. Bib.*, i. col. 904.

ment. In the last four chapters (x.–xiii.) it is directed in a more strenuous and scathing fashion,—as of a self-defence that demands the crushing of an adversary—to those who, the Apostle believes, would still withstand him, and still need exposure. The difference of tone between these two parts is very marked, but not sufficiently so to make us think that they constitute two entirely different Epistles.[1] The note of defence is common to them both; the difference of tone may be accounted for by the fact that the Apostle turns, in thought if not in actual address, to those whose evil influence he even yet dreads, and at whose hands he has already suffered so keenly.

Paul therefore begins by pouring out heartfelt expressions of gratitude for the relief that has been given to his fears. He defends himself against charges of fickleness and dishonesty in having altered certain plans about visiting Corinth, and shows how he had refrained from carrying out these plans really from a desire to spare the Corinthians. He tells them all his anxiety of mind on their account, and how it was the climax of many trials, nearly overtaxing his strength, and almost unfitting him for his labours.

[1] Hausrath in 1870 (*Der Vier-Capitel-Brief des Paulus an die Corinther*) strongly urged the theory that these last four chapters are really the intervening 'lost' Epistle. We have thus preserved three Epistles to the Corinthians, namely, (*a*) 1 Corinthians, (*b*) 2 Corinthians x.–xiii., and (*c*) 2 Corinthians i.–ix. This view did not, for a time, win much acceptance. Holtzmann, Beyschlag, Klöpper, Weizsäcker, Sabatier, Godet, Weiss, Zahn, and others, decide in favour of the integrity of the Epistle. More recently, however, there has been a tendency to adopt the theory. Schmiedel minutely expounds it, and Pfleiderer, Clemen, Krenkel, McGiffert, Adeney, and Moffatt, give it their adherence. Principal Robertson (Hastings' *Dictionary*) and Professor Sanday (*Encyclopædia Biblica*) seriously discuss it; the latter declaring against it; the former regarding it as decidedly not proven. In its defence, Dr. J. H. Kennedy (*Second and Third Corinthians*) presents the ablest argument that has yet appeared in English. He differs from Hausrath in that he regards 2 Corinthians x.–xiii. and 2 Corinthians i.–ix. as mutilated portions, from the former of which the first part, and from the latter of which the last part, have perished, probably through accident to the papyri (p. 154). Although we do not feel that the evidence is decisive enough to warrant interference with the integrity of the Epistle, it must be allowed that the theory is plausible, and that the case for it tends to grow stronger rather than weaker.

He then—indirectly replying to those who boast of the "old religion"—contrasts the ministries of the old covenant and the new, and shows how that of the new is infinitely greater, as the abiding ministry of the Spirit and of liberty; a ministry of suffering and weakness, yet one whose glorious mission is to win the souls of men, verily a ministry of "ambassadors beseeching men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God." In all this, wrought out in quickly varying moods, of joy, of regret, of love, of anger, he shows how keenly he is conscious of the efforts that have been made by the "commended" Jews to undermine his work.

Even in the two chapters which follow (viii. and ix.), and which speak of the Collection which was slowly in progress for the poor of Palestine, this unifying consciousness is not absent. For in anxiety for these poor ones he gives proof, and proof of the noblest kind, that he is not isolated, as his enemies assert, not out of touch with the primitive Church at the home of Christianity, but in profoundest and deepest sympathy with it. He has laboured in Macedonia on its behalf, and he has laboured and will labour in Corinth for the same end. Let the Corinthians rouse themselves in this important matter. It will be a true and tangible token of their willingness to hear his voice and obey his message. He has boasted of them in Macedonia. Let not his high confidence in them be put to shame. They are richer than the Macedonians; let them excel them in liberality, outvie them in good works. And there are higher motives. He that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully, and God loveth a cheerful giver. Ever eager to reach the principles that should underlie Christian action, Paul does not rest till he discloses the ideal that should inspire the followers of Jesus to deeds of alms-giving and benevolence.

In the four closing chapters of the Epistle, the Jewish adversaries, never absent from the Apostle's mind, are finally dealt with in a very strenuous manner. Paul evidently takes up the most important of the charges that have been made against him, their sneers at his person,

their innuendoes against his character and motives, their attacks upon his authority; and he repels them with exceeding vigour and unrepressed indignation, angry but sinning not, swept by stormy gusts of feeling, yet ever remaining master of himself and of the storm. Now he flashes on them with threats, now overwhelms them with mocking irony, and now overtops them with the magnitude and "folly" of his boasting—reluctantly compelled to do what is so distasteful to him, to recount the seals of his ministry, to set forth the hardships he has endured in pursuing it, and the visions and revelations of grace which his Master has vouchsafed to him.

Finally, he exhorts his readers to examine and prove themselves, and to do no evil; to be perfect, to be of one mind, to dwell in peace; closing the long, wonderful, unique apology, which is at the same time a polemic, by the solemn and tender benediction which the universal Church loves to repeat as the last note in her worship.

To the stings and taunts of his enemies, therefore, we owe this great Apologia of St. Paul; not the first or the last service of the kind which the wounds of adversaries have rendered to the religious literature of the world.

Shortly after writing this letter from Macedonia in the autumn of 55, Paul proceeded to Corinth, and spent the following winter in the bosom of the Church he held so dear. We have no record of what happened then. But we know that the situation was meanwhile saved. The Apostle triumphed, and no man renewed the attempt to rob him of his crown of rejoicing in that virgin field where he had been the first to sow and reap for the Master. In the tranquillity of this visit he had leisure to think out and compose, what could only have been done in peace, his Epistle to the Romans. Near the end of his life he again visited the city, but only for a brief space. More than thirty years later, about the year 95, long after the eager spirit was at rest, Clement of Rome wrote a letter to the Christians of Corinth, in which he appeals to the authority of Paul as still acknowledged, exhorting them to read his Epistle, and recalling how the "blessed Apostle" had

rebuked them for that divisive spirit which was again unhappily reviving.[1]

To-day, undoubtedly, one of the chief elements of value in the Epistle is the wonderful revelation it gives us of the Apostle himself. Through all its changing moods and manifold digressions, Paul, in perfect abandon, shows us his very soul,—suffering, rejoicing, enduring, overcoming. It has been truly said that "it enables us, as it were, to lay our hands upon his breast, and feel the very throbbings of his heart." Apart from it, we should never have so clearly understood what the Apostle's life really was in those toilsome journeys, when he plodded from province to province, often persecuted from city to city, preaching the Cross through the pagan West; nor should we have known so well wherein his noble heroism consisted, what were the rugged obstacles he had to surmount, and what the magnificent consolations by which he was upheld. What a marvellous piece of compressed autobiography is contained in those verses which begin at the twenty-third verse of the eleventh chapter: "In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft." Who does not find his heart melting to the man, under the cumulative force of these pathetic phrases? And who is not humbled and rebuked by that indomitable spirit, troubled on every side but not distressed, perplexed but not in despair, persecuted but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed? "Therefore," he cries, "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake."

Especially in a twofold relation does the Epistle reveal to us the heart of the Apostle, namely, in his relation to his converts, and in his relation to his Lord.

1. First of all, it shows us how sensitive he was, how easy it was to touch him on the quick, and to wound his feelings. There were times when, clad in heavenly armour, Paul could have faced whole legions of foes. There were other times when even a child could make him wince;

[1] Clement, *Ep. to the Corinthians*, § 47: Lightfoot's edition, p. 144.

for many brave men have nerve-spots that lie near the fountain of their tears.

The Apostle was very human, and nowhere are his kindred limitations more obvious than in these present incidents. He would be the first to acquiesce, if it were said that even with him the creed was greater than the life. In the hastily written, and nervously repented passages of that lost Epistle; in the restless wandering, like a perturbed spirit, from Troas to Macedonia, to meet the news and know the issue of his acts, we see a man most lovable indeed, most like ourselves when issues hang in the balance, but a man not already perfect, not yet risen to the measure of the stature of Christ. We seem to see One beside him whose supremacy he would have acknowledged, One who never regretted what He had done, never grew sleepless or distressed about anything He ever said. In the defect of the Apostle we have our share, deeper and sadder often than his. But Christ did not share it. In nothing does He more clearly stand apart, whose calm breast was never troubled by the thought that He might have erred. Only One in the great roll of humanity has been like this; only One, who never grew nervous over the consequences of His deeds, who dwelt in such perfect harmony with God that He could say: "He that hath sent Me is with Me: for I do always those things that please Him."[1]

Again, we are shown the intensity with which Paul laboured in his ministry—the tenacity with which he held to his mission, and the invincible courage with which he returned to the fight for his imperilled Church. He loved those converts as only a great soul in Christ could love them. His keenest sorrow came in the disaster that threatened them, and he flew to their defence. He had not only won them for Christ, he was willing to die that he might keep them for Christ. Thrice-honoured servant of God! He held those souls with a grasp that would not

[1] Cf. a very interesting passage in Forrest's *Christ of History and of Experience*: Lect. I. pp. 29–31.

slacken. We honour a soldier who holds a post with a courage that no foe can beat down. What shall we say of this man who wrote these burning words while yet the sentence of death was in his heart? An under-shepherd? Yes, truly. But how noble a study he has made of Him who said: "The hireling fleeth; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep"!

2. Once more, the Epistle brings very clearly before us the relation that subsisted between Paul and his Master.

It is charged with a magnificent consciousness of his high calling in Christ Jesus. He has been called with a divine calling to the most glorious work in which a man can engage, to be to this estranged and weary earth an ambassador of heaven. Received as divine, this vocation is accepted with supreme devotion. Paul knows no other rule, no other will but Christ's. Like a kneeling slave, with upturned gaze fixed on the Master's face, he receives his trust, and never for a single moment does he swerve from its fulfilment.

It is true that this ministry has been a ministry of sorrow. But what then? Through it all rings the note of abounding consolation in Christ Jesus. Paul has never been left alone. There have been no sinking depths in which he has not felt the touch of the Everlasting Arms. It has been a ministry of strain, of suffering, of hair-breadth escapes with the bare life. He has had his thorn in the flesh, and his buffeting of Satan. And yet never was the "power of Christ," resting on frail humanity, more signally manifested. What joy he had, and glory in his infirmities! What moments of rapturous solace! What raising into the heavens, what beatific visions, what hearing of seraphic tones it was not lawful to repeat! Dear to Christ, he never failed to receive the supply of sufficient grace. And it has been so with thousands. Many servants of God have followed in these steps. Yet in palpitating sorrow, and in divine consolation, Paul excelled them all. Read once more that eloquent list of sufferings, embalmed in this Epistle, and say if he must

not have lain very close upon the Master's heart, who thus endured these things, and who gloried in them that the Cross of Christ might be of more effect.

Paul makes clear that he was living every day with Christ as his heavenly hope. The pressure of this last sore time was telling on him. He felt as if the solid earth were trembling beneath his feet. No more did he expect to hear with those mortal ears the shout of the archangel and the trump of God. But he did expect "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." The earthly house of this tabernacle would be dissolved. What of it? There was the homeland, eternal in the heavens, a building of God, an house not made with hands. Christ would lead him thither, and within its shining walls would for ever raise His servant's head

# THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

## I.

## THE HISTORICAL SETTING.

If we except the portraiture of Jesus in the Gospels, the Epistle to the Romans is undoubtedly the most marvellous writing in the New Testament. It treats of the loftiest themes that can concern humanity, and it does so with a grasp, an insight, and a holy audacity that the world can never forget. In view of its great importance, it will be necessary to consider it in somewhat greater detail than the other Epistles. In the first place, the historical setting is of immense interest. It may be treated in two parts: first, Pagan Rome, of whose moral life the Apostle has drawn an appalling picture; and secondly, the Jews and Christians in Rome, the former of whom were long established there, the latter only just beginning to be heard of.

### 1. Pagan Rome

The Epistle was written from Corinth early in the year 56. The Emperor Nero then occupied the Roman throne. He was only twenty years of age, and had succeeded Claudius about three years before. He had not yet fully developed the character that has made his name a byword in history, but it was fairly in the process of formation. His mother, Agrippina, was a woman of debased nature and unscrupulous ambition, and, according

to Suetonius, his wretched father, Domitius Ahenobarbus, had prophesied that no child of theirs could ever be expected to be aught else than detestable and pernicious. He was fatherless at three years of age, and virtually motherless also, for about the same time Agrippina had been sent into exile.[1] His early years were spent in the home of his aunt, Domitia Lepida, who, caring little for him, handed his education over to the influences of a dancing-master and a barber. No guiding care or loving restraint was to be expected, and such good qualities as he possessed were entirely neglected. Self-control was not a word in his vocabulary, and almost ere he was a youth he was familiar with all the vicious pleasures of manhood. When Seneca was recalled from exile to be his tutor, the bias to evil was powerfully developed, though Nero was only then entering on his teens. The utmost the philosopher could do was to strive to keep the intractable spirit from bursting all bounds, a service in which for a time he partially succeeded.

The Romans were not immediately aware of the diseased vanity [2] and untamed savagery of the youth who assumed the reins when Claudius died. The young Emperor played and sang, carved and painted, and dabbled in verse in a Hellenised and dilettante fashion; while his midnight revels, and his incognito brawling and braggadocio in the streets, of which Tacitus tells us so contemptuously, were looked on with good-natured indifference, as, if not becoming to the purple, at least excusable on the score of

[1] H. Schiller, *Geschichte des römischen Kaiserreichs unter der Regierung des Nero*, p. 63 and note.

[2] An amusing scene is depicted by Suetonius when telling of Nero's tyranny over his audiences. During his musical performances no one was allowed to leave the theatre on any account. Many, absolutely worn out with hearing and applauding him, slipped over the walls, while others, feigning to be dead, were carried out for their funeral!

Stories of his public rivalry of professional performers of all kinds, and of his insane and sometimes murderous jealousy of them, are well known. It is said he had a salaried *claque* of 5000 robust young fellows, trained in various kinds of applause, which they practised in his favour whenever he performed.

youthful blood. He was genial, affable, liberal, and the populace delighted in him, not merely for his own sake, but for the sake of their beloved Germanicus and Augustus, from whose stock he sprang. When he appeared before the Senate he delivered eloquent speeches, prepared by Seneca, and charmed men's ears with his earnest promises to govern after the best models of his ancestors. He encouraged the reform of abuses, and very sensibly lightened the burden of taxation. The most excellent feature of his early reign was that he was content to leave public affairs very much to the guidance of wiser and better men. Burrus, the blunt and honourable soldier, kept the provinces in hand, while Seneca and the Senate ruled the city. The Romans were content, and declared that they had not been so well governed since the days of Augustus. Fifty years after, looking back on the first five years of the reign, Trajan spoke of the 'quinquennium Neronis' as a kind of golden age, outshining all other administrations.

These five peaceful years covered the period at which Paul wrote, but they were, as all the world knows, only a temporary lull, a sultry silence, preluding one of the most violent storms of human passion of which history has record. In the year 59 A.D. Agrippina paid for her many crimes by being put to death by the 'monster' to whom she had given birth. The death of the chaste and gentle Empress Octavia followed. Seneca himself suffered banishment and death; and the second Empress, Poppæa, perished by a vicious blow from the Emperor's foot. The wind had been sown, and the harvest of the whirlwind was reaped. Undoubtedly it was a supreme peril to the Empire that it lay within the power of a single man, a madman, to drag it so close to the abyss. The Emperors were autocrats, deified in their lifetime,[1] whose will was law, and

[1] Such titles were bestowed on them as — 'Dominus ac Deus noster; præsens et corporalis deus' (Harnack, *History of Dogma*, i. 119). Cf. also Emil Aust, *Die Religion der Römer*, pp. 96–97; and Schiller, *Nero*, p. 581. In Britain, according to Tacitus (*Annals*, xiv. 31), a temple was erected to the divine Claudius.

who held the lives and destinies of their subjects in the hollow of their hand. The nobles were crushed and powerless under such a régime. Driven from public life, where authority and office were mainly held by the ephemeral puppets of an irresponsible monarch, the old patricians retired into privacy, there to win by luxurious magnificence and unparalleled extravagance, the fame that was not possible in nobler fields.[1] As for the populace, they were held in check and kept in good humour by the unceasing gratuities that were poured out upon them from an apparently exhaustless exchequer. Over all, the Emperor pursued the career which his unbridled passions and despotic will dictated.

In the Apostle's day Rome was hardly any longer Rome. It was an epitome of the whole world. It extended widely over its hills and valleys, huge, irregular, and ill-built, with narrow, winding streets, and high toppling houses, which, in spite of the public improvements and adornments, the palaces, temples, and pleasure-grounds of the Augustan era, were fit fuel for Nero's conflagration. A population of about a million and a half swarmed in its steaming and unhealthy streets, making everlasting clangour by day and night.[2] These crowds were only in a small

[1] Fabulous sums, *e.g.*, were spent by them on the pleasures of the table. The most distant parts of the earth were ransacked to furnish them with dainties, and their menus were most elaborate and fantastic. Gluttony was a prevailing vice, carried to a disgusting length. Cf. Mommsen, *History of Rome*, ed. 1894, v. 387–388. It is said that of 400 books unearthed at Herculaneum, almost all belonging to the private library of a suburban villa, the great majority were devoted to music, rhetoric, and cookery. Cf. Huidekoper, *Judaism at Rome*, p. 91 ; Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, 9th ed., p. 393. On the Roman cuisine, cf. also Guhl and Koner, *Life of the Greeks and Romans*, pp. 501 sqq. On the whole, however, it may be doubted whether ancient Rome exceeded modern London, Paris, or New York, in the extravagance and vagaries of the table.

[2] Friedländer thinks the population probably varied from one to one and a half million, but discusses the difficulty of arriving at an exact result. *Sittengeschichte Roms*, Sechste Auflage, 1888, i. 25, and the detailed Note appended, pp. 58–70. Zumpt's computation of two millions has been often accepted. Merivale, however, thinks it too high, while a few regard it as too low. Cf. Smith's note in Gibbon, iv. 89 ; also Conybeare and Howson, *St. Paul*, ed. 1877, xxiv. 676–677 ; and Schiller's *Nero*, p. 501.

proportion Roman. The old Latin race could scarcely be distinguished among the chaotic masses of foreigners of every race and clime, of every class and condition, that were drawn into this vortex of whirling life at the centre of the world. The conquered provinces of East and West [1] poured into it their ceaseless streams of adventurous spirits: some merely attracted by the life that was there, the luring hum of its pleasures and excitements; others by the opportunities of traffic and occupation, to pursue a career or to amass a fortune; some to be parasites of the rich and panders to their passions; some to escape the nemesis of their crimes, to be lost to vengeance if not to vice in the great multitude of the unknown. The very language was strange in the Roman streets. Nearly all spoke Greek, and it was possible to live in Rome, as Plutarch says he did, without knowing a single word of the tongue of Cicero and Cæsar.[2] And not only the language, but the habits, the dress, the fashions, the insolent swagger and the cringing servility, the immorality and superstitions, of the worst cities in the Orient, were familiar under the shadow of the ancient Capitol.[3]

At the head of the social order stood not the men who boasted of noble blood, but the men who were merely rich. These were continually changing, in a kaleidoscopic manner, according as freedmen or parvenus found their way by an infinity of devious routes to the surface.[4] It was they who alternately corrupted the masses by the prodigal folly of their bounties, and crushed them by their inhuman and

[1] Cf. Niebuhr's *Lectures*, Schmitz' ed., iii. 166–167: Lect. CX.

[2] "The Greeks were the most energetic, as they were also the most intelligent and enquiring, of the middle classes in Rome at this time. The successful tradesmen, the skilled artisans, the confidential servants and retainers of noble houses—almost all the activity and enterprise of the common people, whether for good or for evil—were Greek" (Lightfoot, *Philippians*, p. 20).

[3] Friedländer draws a graphic picture of the Moors, Egyptians, Greeks, Hindus, Oriental princes and their retinues, blonde Flemings, and tatooed savages from Britain, to be seen in the Roman streets. *Sittengeschichte, ut supra*, i. 23, 24.

[4] Cf. Friedländer, i. 392 sqq.

uncivilised tempers. At the bottom of the scale were the people, not the sturdy and virtuous plebs of the old days of the Republic, but a mere conglomerate rabble, living in idleness, debauched by largesses, unconscious of patriotism, fired by no ideals, and destitute of almost any real power in the State. One common vein ran through the whole of society, from the highest to the lowest ranks—the lust of gold. "Money was the supreme deity that all men worshipped."[1] The conquest of the world had swollen the Capital with its treasure, and the consuming desire of the citizens was to lay hands upon it. Those who 'had not' desired to have, and those who 'had' desired to have more. All wits and energies were bent to this end. Legacy-hunting was a fine art, openly and shamelessly pursued, and almost the only occupation that multitudes knew. "To be poor was not only the sorest disgrace and the worst crime, but the only disgrace and the only crime; for money the statesman sold the State, and the burgess sold his freedom; the post of the officer and the vote of the juryman were to be had for money. . . . Men had forgotten what honesty was; a person who refused a bribe was regarded not as an upright man, but as a personal foe."[2]

But Rome not only stumbled over the temptations of the vast wealth that had poured to her feet, she had grown rich in goods and chattels of a kind that led, if possible, to still greater perils. Slavery was the curse of Rome, the festering sore that consumed her, the deepest source of her corruption and her shame. It has been estimated that the slaves in Rome at this period outnumbered the freemen by two to one, some say by three to one. At least two men out of every three who walked the streets, crowded the forum, or swarmed at the games, were slaves. The household was beneath consideration that had not ten. Some of the nobles owned them by tens of thousands. Five hundred was a common number. So thickly was the city

[1] Friedländer, i. 412–413, gives a startling account of the prevailing materialism and self-seeking.

[2] Mommsen, v. 390.

choked with them, that the rulers dared not let them wear a distinctive dress lest they should become dangerously conscious of their strength. All the nations under heaven furnished their quota to the ranks. There were Persians, Syrians, Lydians, Phrygians, Cappadocians, Libyans and Moors, Getæ and Iberians, Celts and Germans. Over this variegated population the masters had almost unlimited power. Slaves were "possessions," and Roman law inflexibly conserved the right of a man to do what he pleased with his own. We may guess what that meant, in a day when free play was given to every gust of passion and to every suggestion of lust. Sometimes the slaves were treated with kindness and even with affection. They were often far more cultured than their masters. They could give instruction in many arts and refinements, and were gay and entertaining companions, capable of showing the Roman how to embellish his home or how to enjoy his fortune. But too often they were treated with great cruelty, punished brutally for the smallest offence, herded together in noisome and pestilent cellars or 'ergastula,' accorded no privileges and no rights, and used or abused in the mere wantonness of caprice.

For all this there was a terrible nemesis. In the first place, slavery destroyed the trade and industries of Rome, and thus gradually supplanted one of the most stable elements of the population. In the country districts their presence ousted the once prosperous peasantry, who consequently flocked citywards to swell the ever-increasing ranks of the idle and pauperised mob. The number of those who thus came to live on the free bounties of the State reached enormous proportions. It is calculated that in the time of Augustus gratuitous provision had to be made for 200,000 men, not counting their wives, sisters, and daughters.[1] These hung about the houses of the great, clamoured for corn in the arena, swayed by their turbulence the policy of the rulers, and were ready at all times for every kind of tumult and excess. Vast regiments

[1] Döllinger, *Gentile and Jew*, ii. 278; Brace, *Gesta Christi*, pp. 97–98.

of vagrants and beggars lounged near the city gates, and haunted the steps and colonnades of the temples. Everywhere work was regarded with profound distaste as beneath the dignity of freemen.

Moreover, every year and every month of the year many of the slaves of Rome were attaining freedom. By the goodwill of their master, or at his death, large numbers were floated out among the 'liberti.' They took with them the manners and spirit of the slave. Into the many offices which they held, in the courts, in the army, in the palace, they carried their "ingrained propensity for lying and deceit," and polluted the very stream of public life at its source. They hired themselves out for every kind of unworthy and degrading task, and it was they who supplied the large army of spies, panders, charlatans, low-bred artists, actors, mimes, and such like 'professors,' by whom the whole city was cursed.

Worst of all, they debauched Rome. They brought into it many new, unnatural, and abominable vices, by which they not only corrupted their masters, but sowed the seeds of untold evil among the children. They were the nurses, the pedagogues, the tutors, the daily companions of young Rome. Life had taught them to fear only one thing, the wrath of man; and, animated by purely selfish considerations and totally devoid of conscience, they set themselves with the utmost sycophancy and artfulness to win the interest and goodwill of their future lords. The most childish desires and growing passions of that sad *jeunesse dorée* were met and ministered to. In the fellowship and under the direction of slaves, the Roman youths learnt all they had to learn, their chief schools being the purlieus of the baths, the circus, and the stage. No wonder most of them grew up swollen with vanity and conceit, tyrannical and uncontrolled, effeminate and enervated, old, jaded, and wearied of life before they had well-nigh left their teens. Slavery has exacted a fearful tax from every nation that has used it, but from none more than from Imperial Rome. It dragged its masters down to a bondage even deeper and darker than its own.

In nothing was this deeper bondage more apparent than in the amusements which characterised the age. Few things lay bare the heart of a nation more surely than its sports. In throwing themselves into these with complete abandon, men reveal the trend and spirit of their life. Tried by this test, the Roman world to which the Apostle so eagerly looked, presents the saddest of sights. The gladiatorial shows of ancient Rome can scarcely come under the category of manly sports. They were simply scenes of organised carnage, in which the strong odour of saffron was not able to extinguish the still stronger odour of blood. The Emperor, of course, gave the grandest spectacles, otherwise his popularity would soon have been on the wane. But senators, generals, nobles, and rich merchants, who were eager to advertise themselves or to win notoriety and applause, vied with him in the magnitude and costliness of their displays.

The Colosseum held 80,000 spectators, and the Circus Maximus thrice that number.[1] They were frequently crowded with yelling and maddened multitudes of men, women, and children, drawn from all ranks of life. Day after day the spectacles were continued, the city meanwhile being maintained in a state of turmoil and excitement. Trajan, it is said, on one occasion brought 10,000 men into the arena in a carnival of blood that lasted for 123 successive days. Under Claudius, the number of those slain in public was so great that the statue of the divine Augustus had to be removed, lest it should either be constantly gazing on murder, or "need to have its eyes constantly veiled."[2] Under Titus 5000 animals perished in a single day, and under Caligula 5000 bears. Nero was not behind. He matched 400 tigers against bulls and elephants; and his soldiers fought with 400 bears and 300

[1] According to Pliny, 250,000. Cf. Friedländer, ii. 323.

[2] So writes Dion Cassius. The idea of blindfolding a god is very characteristic of the time. Cf. Huidekoper, *Judaism at Rome*, p. 75 n.

The carnage was not confined to land. Tacitus (*Ann.* xii. 56, 57) gives an account of a naval display on Lake Fucinus (Celano), where Claudius exhibited 19,000 mariners in battle.

lions. Even giraffes, stags, crocodiles, and serpents were brought in to whip up the sense of novelty and excitement. Women, too, were trained to fight in the arena, and there were combats of dwarfs and of blindfolded men. Slaves were led in naked, unarmed, and chained together, while their frantic and impotent struggles were gloated over with fiendish delight.

The professional gladiators were the true heroes of Roman life. Men talked of them, quoted them, chronicled their doings, extolled their points, backed them, almost adored them, just as men treat the matadors in Spain to-day, and the pugilists nearer home—all at one low level of debasing brutality. There were training-schools for the gladiators where they learnt their strange trade, and bartered their lives for food, pledging themselves to fight till they fell, and to be ready to meet the friend of to-day as their mortal foe to-morrow. Noble Romans were the *aficionados*, the 'fancy,' who supported them, and Roman ladies entertained them, and inflated their vanity with the most flattering favours and adulation.[1] The eyes of the patrons of bloodshed had been accustomed to the arena since they were children. They saw no degradation in it. Their ears had never heard anything more highly praised, more eagerly longed for. It was the continual topic of conversation in street and in home; the boys mimicked its strife in their games, and the orators turned to it for the most telling figures of their rhetoric. But the human spirit could not indulge itself in this fashion with impunity. Cruelty became a commonplace in Rome, and life itself a mere 'drug in the market.' Refinement and gentleness could not survive such fierce and clamorous blows upon the heart-strings. The inclination to softer manners and kindlier deeds perished amid the intoxication of the games. Men feverishly waited for the next display, and only prayed that it might be more frenzied than the last. Other amusements were compelled to stretch themselves to the most extravagant limits, and to venture on the most

[1] Cf. Friedländer, i. 484–485.

startling realism, if they were to hope to entertain an audience for a single hour. In the insane straining for sensation, the theatre and the ballet became indescribable. Few men questioned such things; still fewer protested against them; and yet Seneca confesses, what we can well credit, that he returned from them "the greedier, the more ambitious, more sensual, more savage and inhuman."[1]

One can easily believe that in such a state of society religion must either have been non-existent or very largely a misnomer for something else. It can have had no relation to morality, no elevating influence upon life. In point of fact, such as it was, it existed in a multitude of forms. If Paul had visited Rome he could have said of it, as he said of Athens, that he perceived it abundantly "religious." Its hills and streets were literally crowded with temples, and with statues of gods and deified men and women. These were not the heirlooms of an ancient cult, but were mostly the pious splendours of the religious revival under Augustus, and were even now being continually added to and adorned.

Yet the old Roman religion was dying daily. Men had lost faith in it. It was like a "rotten machine creaking at every joint," ready to fall to pieces. The gods, in number thick as autumn leaves, were mere fanciful human creations, personified to preside over almost every conceivable state of political and domestic life. They were but "abstract imps of momentary act and quality."[2] The simplest act was analysed, and each moment shaped into a deity of its own. There was no end to such a process; "the god-casting business could never be wound up."[3] It was almost beyond human memory to recall the names and functions of the gods. The minutiæ of life were so ringed round by them, that there were deities to be invoked at every step, eating, sleeping, sitting, walking, talking, travel-

[1] Döllinger, *Gentile and Jew*, ii. 283. Cf. also Lecky's *European Morals*, i. ch. ii.; and Friedländer's exhaustive account, ii.: III. Die Schauspiele.

[2] W. Wallace, *Lectures and Essays on Natural Theology and Ethics*, p. 29.

[3] Döllinger, *Gentile and Jew*, ii. 14.

ling. "There is a little god who causes the infant to utter its first cry; there is another who presides over its first word; one who teaches the baby to eat, another to drink; finally, one who keeps it quiet in its cradle . . . deified abstractions of Fear, Cough, Fever, Fortune, Modesty, Safety, the genius of the Custom-house, and above all, the Safety of the Roman People;—in the full force of the word, a civil religion."[1]

Moreover, man created these gods not to be worshipped or obeyed, but to be the instruments of his own selfish desires. Prayer had thus no moral signification. It was never directed to any spiritual ends. No man ever thought of unburdening his soul, or telling the 'plague of his heart,' to the gods. But he invoked them if he wished prosperity in his enterprises, success in his fortune, or furtherance in his intrigues. No passion was too vile, no crime too dark, to be laid before them. A man would pray for the death of his relative, that he might inherit his wealth, or for success in adultery, forgery, or theft. For such purposes the gods were coaxed and wheedled, and tempted with the promise of offerings. Should there be success, the vows were perhaps remembered; but in case of failure, bitter complaints and blasphemous denunciations were not forgotten. Deathbed execrations of the gods were very common. For a disaster at sea, Augustus caused the image of Neptune to be excluded from the processions of the gods; and it was not infrequent for disappointed suppliants to pelt the dumb deities with stones, and to heap other indignities upon them. On the stage the gods were the favourite subjects of ridicule and ribald mirth, and no representation was ever too scandalous for the taste of the mocking crowd.

Nevertheless, the forms of worship were not neglected. The temples were thronged, and the priests were grave, although many wondered, like Cato, how two augurs could possibly meet without laughing.[2] Belief was gone, but

[1] Renan, *Influence of Rome on Christianity*, Hibbert Lectures, pp. 11–12. Cf. also Granger's *Worship of the Romans*, pp. 134–135.

[2] Quoted by Cicero, *De Divin.*, II. xxiv.

ceremony was faithfully observed as a matter of political expediency and good manners. Some devotees were no doubt still haunted with a kind of hopeful credulity. Seneca gives us a curious description of scenes that took place, acknowledging that they look marvellously like sport or madness. "Go to the Capitol. One is busy suggesting divine commands to a god; another is showing Jupiter the time of day; one poses as a lictor; another as an anointer, pretending by gestures to rub in the ointment. A number attend on Juno and Minerva as hair-dressers, and make pretence of curling with their fingers, not only standing far back from the images but even from the temple. Some hold the looking-glass to them; some are soliciting the gods to stand security; while others display bundles of documents before them, and instruct them in their law pleas. A learned and distinguished comedian, now old and decrepit, daily went through his antics and mimicry on the Capitol, as though the gods would gladly be spectators of that which men had ceased to admire. In short, all sorts of artistes spend their time in the temples, and offer their services to the immortal gods."[1]

It is plain that everywhere the grossest superstition was alive and whole-hearted. From the Emperor to the meanest of his subjects every one believed in auguries, astrologies, witchcraft, fortune-telling, necromancy, charms, incantations,[2] and above all in dreams. Hence the city swarmed with augurs, diviners, wizards, and quacks of every description; and for great and small things, for blessing and cursing, men and women repaired to them as their willing dupes. Cicero reproved men for regulating the purposes of life by the cries of crows and jackdaws, but he reproved in vain. Tacitus relates as proof of treachery in the death of Germanicus, that human bones, incantations and spells, leaden tablets with his name inscribed, half-burnt cinders smeared with blood, and such

[1] Seneca, as quoted by Augustine, *Civ. Dei*, vi. 10. Cf. Dods' translation, *City of God*, i. 254.

[2] Cf. Aust, *Die Religion der Römer*, p. 79.

like horrors, were found in the floor and the walls of his house.[1] Comets, meteors, earthquakes, and all natural phenomena, however trivial and common, down to the twittering flight of a bird across the footpath, were regarded as portents. According to Pliny, lightning had at least eleven degrees of significance.[2] It was specially directed against the mighty. Augustus guarded himself against it by wearing the skin of a sea-calf; Tiberius had more faith in laurel leaves; Caligula crept under the bed.

Evidently such multifarious superstitions must have hung as a terrible yoke round men's necks. It was impossible to go anywhere or do anything without paying respect to them. Men were pursued and thwarted, encouraged and betrayed, by the almanac. And the gods were specially busy with humanity when it was asleep.[3] In obedience to a dream, if we may credit Suetonius, Augustus plodded the streets of Rome and gathered coppers as a beggar; and Nero—though this is no mystery—after the murder of his mother, was lashed by dreams into a state of abject misery and terror. "Nowhere can men be tranquil of heart," says Cicero, "not even in sleep, for the greatest number of anxieties and alarms spring from dreams." All believed in their divine significance. A vast literature was concerned with them, and learned men occupied themselves day and night with the science of their interpretation.[4] People troubled by them tried to wash off their influence in the sea, or sat a whole day inert on the ground, smearing themselves with filth. The last thing thought of was to ignore them.

If the old national deities had somewhat sunk into disrepute under the Empire, their place was rapidly taken by legions of others. Ever on the alert for new modes of appealing to the unseen, the citizens of Rome found a

[1] *Annals*, ii. 69.

[2] Cf. Lecky, *Eur. Morals*, i. 367, ed. 1882.

[3] Cf. Granger's *Worship of the Romans*, On Dreams and Apparitions, pp. 28–52.

[4] Cf. Friedländer's account of the Dream-book of Artemidor (second century), iii. 570–571.

wonderful field for their superstition in the creeds of the slaves and strangers within their gates. The Italian gods had shown themselves powerless; it might be that the gods of Greece and Egypt were better. One of the most marked characteristics of the age was the eagerness with which Roman society began to transfer its allegiance to the Oriental religions. These were at first tolerated as a matter of policy, and now adopted as a matter of interest. Their sacred mysteries, their dread yet alluring initiations, and their sensuous ceremonies, were a new experience, a welcome excitement, if no more, to the enfeebled voluptuaries of the Capital. Aphrodite, Cybele, Mithras, claimed their votaries, their victims. But the most fascinating of all were "the wearisome mystical host of the grotesque divinities of Egypt—Isis the mother of nature with her whole train, the constantly dying and constantly reviving Osiris, the gloomy Serapis, the taciturn and grave Harpocrates, the dog-headed Anubis."[1] In Paul's day the worship of Isis in Rome excelled that of all other deities in delirious popularity. She was represented as the supreme mother of all things, the revealer of all secrets, the healer of all troubles. Her worship was at bottom the symbolical expression of the consciousness of the tyranny of nature over humanity, the fit product of Egyptian experience of arid desert, burning sun, rising and falling river. Her dark windowless temples, shunning the sunlight, multiplied enormously, and processions in her honour were continually in the streets; "white figures of women robed in thin gauze, with mirrors on their backs, shrill flute-players, men rattling the sistrum to scare away Typhon, priests with shaven heads, boat-shaped lamps, branches of palm, caducei, baskets, and golden breasts dropping milk. Then wandering figures bearing the masks, dog-headed or hawk-headed, of gods; finally, the goddess herself with the moon's disk on her head."[2]

[1] Mommsen, v. 446.

[2] Hausrath, *Time of the Apostles*, i. 89–90. Cf. also the more detailed account in Aust. *Die Religion der Römer*, pp. 158–159.

The saddest feature of all was the shameless impurity with which the Oriental religions were associated. The wild orgies of the groves, connected with the worship of Aphrodite and Dionysus and Cybele, were only possible in a state of society where all sense of shame and self-respect was lost. Even the shaded courts of Isis and Anubis were stained with the prevailing immorality.[1] Paul knew of what he spake when he said: "They changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts."

At the same time, such sketches of unrelieved gloom must by no means be presented as the whole truth regarding pagan Rome. It is impossible to draw up a just indictment against a whole nation, nor can we in a few pages adequately sum up the characteristics of an age. General statements are never more than generally true; they are always open to specific exception. It becomes us to remember that there were brighter and fairer features to be found in the social life even of the luxurious Empire; and liberal-minded historians, like Merivale, Lecky, and Renan, do not ignore them. Renan[2] reminds us that the true decadence did not come until two centuries later; that men of high character surrounded the throne of Nero, and that there were still families that were models of order, and duty, and concord, and virtue. Merivale writes: "Even at Rome in the worst of times, men of affairs, particularly those in middle stations, most removed from the temptations of luxury and poverty, were in the habitual practice of integrity and self-denial; mankind had faith in the general honesty of their equals, in the justice of their patrons, in the fidelity of their dependants: husbands and wives, parents and children, exercised the natural affections, and relied on their being reciprocated: all the relations of life were adorned in turn with bright instances of

[1] Cf. Friedländer, i. 501; and Aust, *op. cit.*, *passim*.
[2] *Les Apôtres*, pp. 306–308; also Hibbert Lects., p. 23.

devotion, and mankind transacted their business with an ordinary confidence in the force of conscience and right reason."[1]

Nothing is more abhorrent than the pharisaic boasting of one age over another. The immorality of Imperial Rome has been exposed with a brutal frankness by its own historians and poets.[2] Other ages have sunk deeply enough, but with a more politic reticence, and the worst possible use to make of the study of history is too lightly to lay flattering unctions to the soul. A consideration even of Christian history gives a moralist too much to blush for. Cruel and inhuman laws, fanatical intolerance, pitiless tyranny, open and concealed vice, the sensuality and debauchery of great cities, the intemperance, gambling, and prevailing covetousness of whole nations, are black facts which even the modern era has not banished from the world.

Nevertheless, even the writers who are most willing to be guarded and generous are compelled to use language of a very startling kind regarding ancient Roman society. "Things had come to a point," says Niebuhr, "at which no earthly power could afford any help."[3] "It was the most frightful feature of the corruption of ancient Rome," writes Lecky, "that it extended through every class of the community."[4] "The criminal statistics of all times and countries," says Mommsen, "will hardly furnish a parallel to the dreadful picture of crimes—so varied, so horrible, and so unnatural — which the trial of Aulus Cluentius unrolls before us in the bosom of one of the most respected families of an Italian country town."[5] And Merivale also may be quoted to the same effect: "Sensuality in its most degrading forms pervaded all classes, and was fostered by the publicity of ordinary life, by the allurements of art,

[1] *Romans under the Empire*, ch. liv.; ed. 1890, vi. 455.

[2] On the caution with which the accounts of the Satirists should be received, cf. Dill's *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*, bk. ii. ch. i.

[3] *Lects.*, iii. 169.

[4] *Eur. Morals*, i. 262.

[5] *History of Rome*, v. 390.

sometimes by the direct injunctions of a gross superstition, to a degree of shamelessness which has made it the opprobrium of history."[1]

It is well to let such statements sink into our minds, if we are to understand many things to which Paul refers, and the awful background of iniquity that was in his thoughts when writing certain parts of his Epistle.

It is chiefly among adherents of the philosophical sects that we must look for examples of the more austere side of Roman life. Even the Sceptics did much to pave the way for the new religion by the merciless manner in which they exposed the old. Doubt and inquiry broke up the fallow ground for truth, and floods of satire were poured on the superstitions of the time. The noblest spirits, however, almost all belonged to the school of the Stoics. They drank from the purest springs of Greek tradition, and inculcated a high morality, with lofty conceptions of duty. They were the guides and counsellors whom men sought in perplexity, the sympathetic advisers to whom they looked in affliction. They were the means, too, of adding many just and humane laws to the statute-book of their country. Seneca, Epictetus, Aurelius — a statesman, a slave, an Emperor—are stars of the first magnitude, sufficient to give lustre to the history of any age. Seneca was a contemporary of St. Paul, and may be taken as one of the best types of his school. It is too true, indeed, that he was subdued to what he worked among, and his conduct was often inconsistent with his lofty utterances. "His life utterly contradicted his philosophy," says Dion Cassius. "He denounced tyrants, and was the tutor of a tyrant; he sneered at the companions of kings, and was never away from the palace. He blamed the rich, and yet in a few years amassed a fortune of 75 million denarii" (about three million sterling). His somewhat Machiavellian counsels to young Nero, his panegyric of Claudius, almost immediately followed by the most vicious lampoons, and his attitude at the death of Agrippina, are undoubted blots

[1] *Romans under the Empire*, vi. 453.

upon his good name.[1] Dion's judgment, however, must be accepted with caution. "It contains much that is true and correct," says Niebuhr, "but he exaggerates in his censure, and is altogether unable to perceive that Seneca rises like a giant above all his contemporaries."[2] It is possible to accuse him of a hollow declamation and high-sounding commonplace, and to condemn his style as affected and sentimental; yet he was the accepted oracle of all who sought after better things in the Rome of his day, and it may be frankly acknowledged that many passages of his writings, on the follies and vanities of the age, on duty, on providence, on the solidarity of mankind, on the deep-rooted nature of sin, the conflict between flesh and spirit, the longing for a purer life, and the immortality of the soul, might almost have come from the pen of the Christian Apostle.[3] It was on the practical side that Seneca and all his school most conspicuously failed. There was nothing of the nature of an earnest endeavour to bring their doctrine to bear on the lives of men. It was thought vain to take the word of philosophy to the masses. Its message was for the 'wise and prudent,' and had no meaning for common people. To them it was but a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. Stoicism thus articulated a body of doctrine to which it really never gave life. It failed lamentably in its lack of sympathy. Entirely selfish in its conceptions, it had not even a pulse-beat of love for humanity. "Men who taught that the husband or the father should look with perfect indifference on the death

[1] Cf. Schiller's *Nero*, pp. 295–296; Hausrath's *Time of the Apostles*, iv. 80; and Lightfoot's Dissertation in *Philippians*.

[2] *Lects.*, iii. 192.

[3] Passages showing the close approach of Seneca and the Stoics to Christian thought are culled by Merivale, Lightfoot (*loc. cit.*), Fisher (*Beginnings of Christianity*), and Farrar (*Seekers after God*), and may be met with on almost every page of the translations of Long and Stewart. The question of a possible Christian influence on Seneca has been much discussed. Cf. Orr's *Neglected Factors in the Early History of Christianity*, pp. 176–184, and references. Huidekoper, in his *Judaism at Rome*, has an interesting chapter on the influence which Judaism had on both the Greek and the Roman Stoics.

of his wife or his child, and that the philosopher, though he may shed tears of pretended sympathy in order to console his suffering friend, must suffer no real emotion to penetrate his breast, could never found a true or lasting religion of benevolence. Men who refused to recognise pain and sickness as evils were scarcely likely to be very eager to relieve them in others."[1] The Stoic ideal was to harden itself against all human distress, and its panacea for every ill was—death. "If the house smokes, get out of it," was the counsel of Epictetus. Suicide was the highest human prerogative. With so sovereign a remedy at command no man need complain. If he were in bondage, lo, every throbbing vein of his body pointed the way of escape. He need not be a slave when liberty was ever at the door. "Do you see your neck, your throat, your heart?" said Seneca. "These are the places of salvation." The last and noblest triumph was, with philosophic calm, to "shuffle off this mortal coil."

Hence, amid all the wealth and luxury of the age, there was a profound and almost universal note of sadness. It wails through the writings of the philosophers, the historians, the poets, and "doubt and infinite pain are the impress of the time." Everywhere there is a burdensome sense of unworthiness, and a hopeless consciousness of inability to escape from it. Impossible to ignore, equally impossible to cure! "One and all," cried Seneca, "we are slaves to sin; and it always will be so. No man can help himself. He needs another's hand." Human ideals were set up as a stimulus to the mind. "We need a man," said Epictetus. But soon "Diogenes was not poor enough, nor Epaminondas brave enough, nor Cato enough of Cato. The quarrel as to which was greatest made them all little."[2] The longing for a perfect exemplar was pathetically and perpetually baffled. Moreover, men were wearied of the hopeless polytheism in which they were entangled. As the unity of mankind was more and more realised, there

[1] Lecky, *Eur. Morals*, i. 192.
[2] Hausrath, *Time of the Apostles*, i. 48–49.

was a feeling after one living God, who should be for all, and over all. In Him might be found the salvation that could not be found in nature or in man. "A God they must have and they coveted, whom they could in all sincerity address in prayer, who, as all-ruling lord and judge, would be the object of dread and fear, and, as all holy and merciful, the cynosure of homage and love, satisfying every want of the troubled and longing heart. . . . The vessel was ready, and waited for the wine of the new doctrine which it was destined to receive."[1] That highest of all boons was to come through a despised race and a crucified Messiah. Judaism opened a way, and the heralds of the Cross were already treading it, right into the great needy heart of pagan Rome.

## 2. Jews and Christians in Rome.

Various circumstances conduced to the rapid spread of the gospel in the Roman Empire. The universal use of the Greek language, the easy and safe means of travel, and the general toleration extended to the subject races and their religions, were important factors. But the most important of all was the widespread dispersion of the Jewish people, and the position and influence which they had gained in the great cities. Their settlements were the centres to which the evangelists naturally and immediately turned, and they and their proselytes were as a rule the first-fruits of the conversion. So far the way was prepared, and the channel already opened, along which the spirit of the new religion was to run.

Nowhere had the Jews obtained a stronger hold than in Rome itself. They had set foot in the city as early as the days of the Maccabees, when more than one embassy was sent to the Senate. But their first important appearance was when Pompey, after the conquest of Jerusalem in B.C. 63, carried many of them away into slavery. The majority seem soon to have acquired their liberty,

[1] Döllinger, *Gentile and Jew*, ii. 286, 288.

though the reason is not given. Philo attributes it to the generosity of the Romans, who were reluctant to do violence to the religious scruples of the Jews; others think that these scruples were so troublesome that the masters found their new slaves rather a nuisance; while others again conjecture that there may have been rich settlers in Rome, who, with characteristic national spirit, bought the liberty of their countrymen.[1] However it may have been, the number of the Jewish freedmen or 'libertini' increased rapidly. In the days of Cæsar, of whom, as the rival of Pompey, they were zealous partisans, kindly patronage and toleration were bestowed on them; and under Augustus their privileges were still further extended. Residence in the capital thus became attractive to the Jews. Herodian princes travelled to it for education, as well as to plunge into the gaieties of its courtly life, while some of them spent the most of their days in it as hostages to the Empire.[2] Above all, the opportunity of commerce and petty trading, at which the race were notorious adepts, drew thousands of them to Rome. About the year of Christ's birth, some 8000 Roman Jews joined themselves to a deputation which came from Palestine; and in the reign of Tiberius the Jewish element in the population of the city is estimated at 60,000.[3] The headquarters of this large community were the low districts of the Trastevere, on the right bank of the river, on the slopes of the Janiculum. There they formed their ghetto, such as many European cities have known, and none has ever greatly loved. But they were not confined to the Trastevere; they spread all over the city, and had distinctive settlements even in the most aristocratic quarters. The names of at least seven organised religious communities have come down to us on inscriptions: three called after noble patrons, with whose households their members were probably chiefly

[1] Cf. Milman, *History of the Jews*, ed. 1883, ii. 451–452; also Hausrath, *Der Apostel Paulus*, p. 474.

[2] Huidekoper, *Judaism at Rome*, p. 113; cf. also Schürer, *Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, Div. II. ii. 239 n.

[3] Hausrath, *Time of the Apostles*, iv. 147; *Der Apostel Paulus*, p. 475.

associated, synagogues of Augustus, Agrippa, and Bolumnus; two, after particular districts in whose neighbourhood their members resided, the synagogue of the Campus, that is the select Campus Martius, and the synagogue of the Subura, the industrial quarter of ancient Rome; one named significantly 'of the Hebrews,' because its members still adhered to the native tongue; and one called the synagogue of Elaia.[1] These separate communities enjoyed many privileges; they were not only allowed free exercise of their religion, but also had the right of internal jurisdiction. Their Sabbaths were respected, and they were permitted to collect and administer their own funds, such as the tax for the Temple at Jerusalem. They were exempted, too, from service in the army, while as free citizens they had the right of appeal to the Emperor, and could not be subjected to degrading punishments, such as scourging and crucifixion.

Many Jews in Rome, thus tolerated and privileged, rose to high rank and public office, and were distinguished as senators and knights, while many more were honoured as physicians, exorcists, tutors, poets, editors, and actors. But the great bulk of them were traders of all shades and complexions, often commanding the markets, and often stooping to services in which no others would engage, never disdaining to turn a denarius, honest or otherwise: were vendors of matches, dealers in small-wares and cast-off clothes, barterers of sulphur-sticks for broken glass, porters, money-lenders, fortune-tellers, brokers, ragpickers, pedlars, pilferers, and whining mendicants, trained and to the manner born, chiefly frequenting, with a basket and bundle of hay as their sole menage, the environs of the

[1] Cf. Berliner, *Gesch. der Juden in Rom*, i. 62–64, and pp. 72 sqq., where translations of the inscriptions are fully given. There is difference of opinion as to the synagogue of Bolumnus. The inscription speaks of a proselyte named Sara, "mother of the synagogues Campus and Bolumnus." Berliner regards Campus and Bolumnus as the name of a united district. Schürer, *loc. cit.*, p. 247, takes Bolumnus as equivalent to Volumnus, the name of a patron. As to the synagogue of Elaia, Schürer says it was "so called from the symbol of the olive." Garrucci thinks the reference is to the prophet Elia. Berliner suggests that the word stands for Velia, a district adjoining the Palatine.

synagogues, the markets, the bridges, the sacred grove of Egeria, and the 'dripping gate of Capena,'[1] which led out to the Appian Way. The Romans regarded them on the whole with infinite disdain, and historians like Tacitus, and poets like Juvenal and Martial, pour on them all the vials of their contempt. They were disliked equally for their industry and for their meanness, for their virtues and for their filthy habits; while they were daily butts for ridicule on account of their peculiar abstinences and ceremonial rites. Their unsocial qualities, their spiritual pride, their unconcealed scorn of the prevailing idolatries, their refusal to do homage to the deified Emperors, and even more personal matters, such as their marked physiognomy, their sanctimonious expression, their shuffling gait, their shabby clothes, and their malodorous bundles, were all grounds of offence.[2] It was said they worshipped Bacchus, and paid homage to the head of an ass, and even to the pig; that they were guilty of human sacrifice; that their vaunted Exodus from Egypt was in reality an expulsion of lepers; and that their day of rest was but an excuse for idleness.

No language, indeed, was too vile for the Romans to apply to the Jews. Tacitus himself was perhaps one of the greatest sinners in this respect. In a notorious section of his *History* (v. 5) he scoffs at the idea of the Jews being worshippers of so jocund a deity as Bacchus—a notion which Plutarch seriously discusses—because they were a miserable people, 'absurdus sordidusque.' He charges them with hatred of the human race, and bitterly complains that their first injunctions to their proselytes are to despise the gods, to abjure country, parents, children, brothers. He also imputes to them indulgence in the most abominable vices.[3] He is so supremely indifferent to truth, and even to consistency, that in the same chapter

[1] Juvenal, *Sat.* iii. 11, "madidamque Capenam." An aqueduct passed over the gate.

[2] Cf. Renan, *Les Apôtres*, pp. 290–291; Graetz, *History of the Jews*, ii. 204; Reinach, *Textes Relatifs au Judaïsme*, Préf. xiv, xvii sqq.

[3] "Projectissima ad libidinem gens; inter se nihil illicitum."

he gives us in full bloom the fable about the ass's head, and almost immediately follows with assertions of the absolute spirituality of Judaism and its intolerance of every kind of idol, even relating the experience of Pompey who entered the Temple and found it empty. This particular calumny may be traced as far back as the time of Mnaseas, 276–195 B.C., and Tertullian tells us that it was afterwards made against the Christians. The reason commonly given for it was, that a herd of wild asses had revealed water to the Israelites in the desert. Tacitus also, in the same chapter, takes up the charge of expulsion from Egypt on account of leprosy, which Josephus deals with in his writing *Against Apion*.[1] That the Jews should be charged with worshipping the pig may seem strangest of all, yet this animal was a subject of religious reverence in many of the western parts of Asia Minor. It was used as a purificatory sacrifice, and its image accompanied the dead to their graves.[2] The Semites, however, shrank from it; and, in the case of the Jews, the Romans interpreted this as a superstitious fear. Plutarch discusses whether the Jews abstained from pork from veneration or aversion, and gravely suggests that the pig was honoured because its use of its snout gave the first idea of a ploughshare. The general opinion was, that abstinence from swine-flesh was due to the belief that so foul-living an animal spread skin disease, especially leprosy. The charge of annually sacrificing a human being is also discussed by Josephus *Against Apion*.[3] Finally, it may be noted that Alexandria was the prolific source of most of the calumnies.[4]

The Jews, moreover, bore the character of being easily excited and roused to turbulence. They gave immense trouble by their frequent complaints and persistent petitions. The magistrates dreaded them, and even Cicero, when delivering one of his great orations, lowered his voice

[1] I. 34–35. [2] Ramsay, *Hist. Geog. of Asia Minor*, p. 32.

[3] II. 8.

[4] The original authorities are admirably traced by Reinach, *Textes Relatifs, passim.* Reference to modern monographs and histories are given by Schürer, *Jewish People*, II. ii. 292 n.

at certain parts, lest he should rouse the ire of the Jewish listeners. They were guilty of frequent quarrels and tumults among themselves, which were all the more bitter that they were religious, and, in the reign of Claudius, their assemblies had to be forbidden, and many of them forced to leave the city. The rulers seem to have been only too glad when the hated race could be let alone, for their clannish vindictiveness was proverbial; and it is said that a governor who abused his power in Palestine, might certainly reckon on being hissed and insulted when he trod again the streets of Rome.[1]

Such records reveal the large amount of notice this despised people drew upon themselves, and the influence which, in spite of scorn and opposition, they exerted. "Yielding and yet tenacious, they were in the ancient as in the modern world everywhere and nowhere at home, and everywhere and nowhere powerful."[2] Their power, such as it was, was a matter of supreme irritation to the Romans. It displayed itself chiefly in the insidious and successful propagation of their faith. Seneca is reported by Augustine as having said of them that "the conquered gave laws to the conquerors," and he can only have meant the laws of religion. Juvenal complains of those who,

> "Taught the Roman ritual to deride,
> Cling to the Jewish, and observe with awe
> All Moses bade in his mysterious law."[3]

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[1] Cicero's case is very significant. He seems to have thought it an act of special courage to speak publicly against the Jews in Rome, a venture which he made with much trepidation in his speech in defence of Flaccus, who was accused of seizing the Jewish Temple-tax when he was a governor in Asia Minor. Jewish freedmen crowded the court, and the renowned advocate was afraid: "Sequitur auri illa invidia Judaici. . . . *Summissa voce agam*, tantum ut judices audiant; neque enim desunt qui istos in me atque in optimum quemque incitent: quos ego, quo id facilius faciant, non adjuvabo."

[2] Mommsen, v. 417.

[3] *Sat.* xiv., Gifford's translation. In the context Juvenal throws interesting light on Jewish practices and common opinion about them; on their numerous proselytes, their observances and abstinence from swine-flesh; their supposed worship of the heavens and the clouds; their detestable exclusiveness, and their sabbatic indolence.

From the very beginning Judaism had made provision for being a missionary religion. Its law, its psalms, its prophecies, its histories, are full of references to the wider outlook, and to the generous admission of the stranger to the fold.[1] It was a flattering thing to Jewish pride to find the Gentiles willing to accept the Jewish creed, and the sacred business of propaganda was never neglected wherever the adventurous children of Abraham wandered. Some of the more bigoted Rabbis regarded such efforts with profound distrust; they spoke of the converts as the "scab of Israel," and said that the proselytes should not be trusted even until the fortieth generation. Nevertheless, the tendency was to leaven the heathen world, and many were zealous enough to compass sea and land for the minutest gain in that direction. They succeeded not merely among the ignorant and ignoble, but even markedly among those of high station and culture. If it could not be said in Rome that the world was gone after them, yet they had their willing adherents in palace and mansion, in camp and lowly dwelling. Members of the proudest patrician families were not ashamed to be ranked as proselytes. These at first were chiefly women,[2] but the men followed. Jewish places of meeting began to be frequented by strangers; the Sabbath was observed, and the books of the law, the sacred poesy, and prophecy, were carefully studied. Moses was spoken of as a great religious reformer; and the simplicity and spirituality of the synagogue services were contrasted with the wearisome and sensuous ceremonies of other religions. A number of the converts, no doubt, hung merely about the fringe of Judaism. When the Empress Poppæa was boasted of as a proselyte, and the palace itself became 'a nursery of Jewish usages and opinions,' it is easy to understand that a kind of fashion was set, and that attendance at the synagogue was with many no more than a dalliance. Yet

[1] Cf. Graetz, ii. 216 sqq.; Cheyne, *Jewish Religious Life after the Exile*, Lect. VI.; and Plumptre, *s.v.* Proselyte, Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*.

[2] Cf. Derenbourg, *Palestine*, pp. 223–224; and Friedländer, *Sittengeschichte*, i. 502.

others were deeply in earnest. Some even accepted the utmost demands of Mosaism, and willingly subjected themselves to a complete ritual. We cannot doubt their sincerity or the purity of their motives. If exemption from military service and profitable commercial connections were allurements to some, others can only have thought of being rewarded in more spiritual ways. Their proselytism meant to them immediate loss, and no small amount of suffering. We are compelled to admire them for what they must have endured, in the estrangement of their kindred, and in the contempt and persecution of the devotees of the all-pervading idolatries.

Such gains must be reckoned as the triumph of a pure spirituality in religion. Personally the Jews were only the objects of scorn, and yet their worship came to be recognised as something better and nobler than even Greece and Egypt were able to teach. The propaganda was no doubt carried on in a very tactful manner. The Pharisees especially were adroit and persuasive missionaries. The easiest side of things was presented to the inquiring Gentile, and he was led on quietly from stage to stage. A considerable literature, of an apocalyptic cast, and mostly cloaking itself under assumed and imposing names—what Graetz calls 'a pious fraud'—was employed to further the movement.[1]

But the chief causes of success were in the needs of the surrounding world, and in the way in which the religion of Israel promised to meet them. The Romans, as we have seen, were longing for deliverance from the awful tyranny of evil within and around them. "On all sides, and to a degree unparalleled in history, we find men who were no longer satisfied with their old religion, thirsting for belief, passionately and restlessly seeking for a new faith."[2] To them it appeared that salvation was of the Jews, and the word of Zechariah was fulfilled: "Men shall take hold of

[1] Cf. Graetz, ii. 206–209; Hausrath, *Time of the Apostles*, i. 112 sqq.; Huidekoper, *Judaism at Rome*, Appendix; and Hudson, *Jews in Rome*, pp. 45 sqq.

[2] Lecky, *Eur. Morals*, i. 387.

the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you." In Jehovah, all-knowing and all-powerful, caring for men with an infinite wisdom, and filling their hearts with His perfect love, it seemed as if the aspirations, the imagination, the conscience, of the Gentile world, were at length to be satisfied. The monotheistic longings of an age wearied with many gods, reached a welcome resting-place in His all-embracing supremacy, the more to be trusted that it came as no tardy philosophic speculation, but as the original conception of a faith already hoary with antiquity. No degrading myths were associated with His name, and no idols were permitted in His courts. He stripped the crown from every other head, and brooked no rival by His side. Isis and Osiris were plunged in Egyptian gloom, never to be found again, and the great Sun-God himself had to sink in everlasting night.

> "Thou art but as a word of His speech,
> Thou art but as a wave of His hand;
> Thou art brief as a glitter of sand
> 'Twixt tide and tide on His beach;
> Thou art less than a spark of His fire,
> Or a moment's mood of His soul:
> Thou art lost in the notes on the lips of His choir
> That chant the chant of the Whole."

Above all, Judaism was a religion of hope, whose face was turned to the dawn of a great day, and whose golden age did not lie pathetically behind. The Messianic kingdom and the great apocalyptic visions were yet to be. This sad, sinful world, so rotten to the core, would be overwhelmed at the Divine Coming,[1] and happy would they be who were found in the Messiah's glorious train! Even now they could be saved by hope, and could enter into

[1] On the belief in Rome's impending destruction, and the passages of the Sibylline Oracles on the subject, see an interesting account in Huidekoper, ch. vi. and Appendix; also Döllinger, *Prophecies and the Prophetic Spirit of the Christian Era*, p. 17. It is thought that the view originated in the horror caused by Pompey's desecration of the Holy of Holies.

a purified and higher life. It is not to be marvelled at that the troubled and the heavy-laden of pagan Rome came and sought to lay their burdens down under the shadow of the Almighty. The strongest and beyond all doubt the surest cord that drew the proselyte to the synagogue, was the 'hope of Israel'

And now this hope was declared to have had a strange and unexpected fulfilment. Messiah had come, lowly in guise, rejected and crucified, yet Israel's King!

Judean rumour ran fast along the lines of the Jewish dispersion. News of all that took place in Jerusalem passed with almost incredible rapidity to the remotest towns and cities of the world. Every wind that blew over the sea sped the Jew upon his journey, and the continual dust along the great highways of the Empire was largely the dust of his restless feet. Hence we may be sure the doings of Caiaphas, and Herod, and Pilate, were soon the common talk of many slaves and freedmen on the Roman Palatine, and in the shops and hovels of the Trastevere. The labours, the words and deeds, and the awful death of Jesus of Nazareth, must often have been thus recounted. And swiftly on the heels of such tidings would come the rumours and the breath of Pentecost. The 'sojourners of Rome,' returning from their pilgrimage, could tell of the memorable things that took place then—the strange sounds, the gathering of the vast crowd, the swaying of it by the Galilean peasants, the tongues, the signs, and the enormous conversion to the faith in the crucified and risen Jesus. And other messengers, some of them no doubt converts, would follow these, not from Jerusalem alone, but,—as the influence of Stephen, and Peter, and Paul spread out in ever-increasing rings,—from Samaria and Damascus, from Cæsarea and Antioch, from Ephesus and Corinth. Let but a few years pass, and, as town after town is lit up with the beams of gospel light, it is not only conceivable that events in the East were thoroughly well

known in Rome, but rather it would be utterly inconceivable if they were not.

Yet the Jews could never see eye to eye in matters of religion. The news of the Messiah was but the signal for fierce discussions ending in fanatical tumult. It was because of riots over 'Chrestus' that the edict of Claudius was launched against the synagogues. This was in the year 51, and shows that long before Paul wrote his Epistle, the followers of Jesus in Rome were already in evidence strong enough to arouse an opposition whose violence could only be dealt with by the intervention of the powers.[1]

To Roman eyes, however, the Christians were still only a Jewish party, and the edict made it prudent and even necessary for many of them to leave the city. There was good wrapped in the heart of this evil. Aquila and Priscilla, probably already prominent Christians in Rome, went to Corinth, and there came into intimate fellowship with Paul. Most likely they were not the only Christian refugees who had such an experience; and as the edict of Claudius does not seem to have been either very long or very rigorously enforced, we may believe that many who soon quietly returned to their places in Rome, were greatly confirmed and enlightened by contact with the Apostle in his labours among the Gentiles.

Such is the most probable account we can give of the origin of the Christian Church in Rome. There is no

[1] There are three ways of interpreting the famous passage of Suetonius: "Judæos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit." Chrestus may have been the name of a riotous slave; or may refer to Jewish Messianic expectations, a constant source of excitement; or to the distinctively Christian hope, already powerfully agitating men's minds. The last is the view held by the majority of scholars. The 'expulit' of Suetonius is probably too strong. Dion Cassius (*Hist.* lx. 6. 6) gives the edict a milder form. (See his words quoted by Reinach, *Textes*, p. 188; or by Milman, *Jews*, ii. 453 n.) He says their vast numbers made it difficult to carry out an expulsion of the Jews, but that they were forbidden to hold their religious assemblies. This would probably suffice, especially if, after all, it was not so much in Rome as in Judea that a revolt of the Jews was at this time dreaded. Cf. Lewin, *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, i. 275.

definite information about it in the Scriptures. It seems to have originated in a very natural and spontaneous way, formed, as it were, by "a process of quiet and fortuitous filtration."[1]

Needless to say, such a simple and humble origin did not long suit the pretensions of the proud Church that ultimately was established in Rome. The tradition arose as early as the end of the second century that it had been founded by St. Peter; and considerably later it was asserted that the Apostle had spent a period of twenty-five years as its Bishop, until his martyrdom in the year 67. Neither of these traditions is historically verifiable; on the contrary, they have been frequently proved to be almost impossible. Few would now endorse the dictum of Döllinger: "The Church must have been founded by an Apostle, and that Apostle can only have been St. Peter."[2] The necessity for an apostolic foundation lay, he believed, in the importance of the situation: such a field could not be left to chance; "it must have been seriously entertained." But this is scarcely argument. Indeed, the assumption that every important Church of the first age must have had an apostolic origin, is quite unhistorical. "With regard to the spread of Christianity locally, we should not ascribe too much to the personal exertions of the Apostles. There seem to have been a great number of Christian Churches at a very early date in countries which there is no evidence that any of the Apostles ever visited."[3]

Dr. Döllinger also lays stress on the view that Paul would not visit Rome—withstood his longing to visit it—because he would not build on another man's foundation. But this does not correctly interpret the Apostle's meaning (xv. 19–25). Paul really says he was frequently hindered from coming to Rome, because he was so busily engaged elsewhere opening up new fields for the gospel.

[1] Hort, *Prolegomena to Romans*, p. 9.
[2] *The Church of the First Age*, ed. 1867, p. 94.
[3] Baur, *Church History*, i. 66 n.

He had meant again and again to come, had he been able. Now the way is clear, because his work 'in these regions is over. Only, at the present moment, he must still refrain from visiting Rome, not on account of any scrupulous principle, but because affairs of a pressing kind are calling him to Jerusalem. When that task is over he will come to Rome. It is to make much out of small material, to infer that the tone of "apologetic respectfulness" which pervades the Epistle, is due to Paul's consciousness that one so honoured as Peter had already occupied the field. It is due simply to the fact that, while he knows many of the Roman Christians, there are many more who are unknown to him. To address strangers in Rome, as in Athens, would naturally appeal to the innate courtesy of the Apostle. Had Paul been conscious of Peter's presence in Rome, it would have been impossible for him to have avoided all mention of the fact; while, on the other hand, his reference to Rome as lying within his sphere as Apostle of the Gentiles, expressly excludes the presidency there of the Apostle of the Circumcision. Peter, we may well believe, visited Rome late in life, very likely after Paul's imprisonment.[1] From that 'Babylon' he probably wrote his Epistle, and the tradition that he suffered martyrdom there under Nero, is generally accepted. But the claim that he founded the Church in Rome, and ruled it for five and twenty years, has long fallen to the ground. Fain would the Church, whose reliance on 'authority' is one of her most notable characteristics, find her origin in the 'Petrus' of whom she believed the Lord spoke so highly, and thus trace her 'power of the keys' straight back to the Master's hand. And yet it is obvious to many that "if there is anything in the world that Jesus did not institute, it is the Papacy."[2]

Without the direct help of any of the Apostles, Christianity gradually rooted itself here and there in different

[1] On Peter at Rome, cf. Renan, *L'Antechrist*, p. 186 and Appendix; Baur, *Paul*, i. 228 sqq.; Hatch, *s.v.* Peter, *Ency. Brit.* xviii. p. 696 and note; Chase, Hastings' *Dict.* iii. 777.

[2] Renan, Hibbert Lectures, p. 64.

quarters of Rome.[1] Freed from the irksome restrictions of Judaism, and appealing to the sympathies and affections, and to moral and spiritual ideals, in a way the prevailing cults and philosophies never did, it met the needs of all classes in the pagan world. In so vast and mixed a population it is only natural to believe that its adherents were of varied types. Many earnest-minded Jews doubtless accepted the Messiahship of Jesus. Still more would there be a readiness to believe among the proselytes, and especially among those simply styled 'devout.'[2] The Jews were born into Judaism; the proselytes had only chosen it, and no doubt felt themselves free to choose again when something better offered. Many must have been added directly from the ranks of paganism, although even they had probably some antecedent knowledge of Judaism and its revelation of God.[3] In course of time these would indeed form the predominant element. We may well pay homage to the courage of their decision. They must have suffered even more than the proselytes to Judaism. The religion of Israel was tolerated and privileged in Rome, and had a national prestige and age-long traditions, whereas Christianity was a new creed, and its adherents were looked on as a pestiferous sect. They were not only regarded as holding the most shameful and atrocious superstitions, but as being animated with positive hatred to the human race.[4] To cast in one's lot with a class so despised and maligned, was virtually to cut one's self off from the com-

[1] Says Lightfoot, "A heterogeneous mass, with diverse feelings and sympathies, with no well-defined organisation, with no other bond of union than the belief in a common Messiah; gathering, we may suppose, for purposes of worship in small knots here and there, as close neighbourhood or common nationality or sympathy or accident drew them together" (*Philippians*, p. 13).

[2] *Vide supra*, p. 103 n.

[3] Cf. Harnack's *Hist. of Dogma*, i. 91 n.

[4] Tacitus, *Ann.* xv. 44. Christianity is "exitiabilis superstitio"; and Christians "were condemned, not so much for the burning of Rome, as for the hatred of humanity." They were, of course, 'atheists' and 'traitors'; "but there were mysterious whispers of darker horrors than these; hideous orgies which rivalled the loathsome banquet of Thyestes, shameless and nameless profligacies which recalled the tragedy of the house of Laius" (Lightfoot, *Philippians*, p. 27).

monest and dearest associations of Roman life. "The innumerable deities and rites of polytheism were closely interwoven with every circumstance of business or pleasure, of public or of private life; and it seemed impossible to escape the observance of them, without, at the same time, renouncing the commerce of mankind, and all the offices and amusements of society."[1] It was the bitter experience of the converts to be ostracised from the society in which they had been accustomed to move, and to find that their most pitiless foes were those of their own house.

In spite of such obstacles the contagion of the gospel spread ominously among all classes. It penetrated the 'household' of the prince Aristobulus, and also that of the great freedman Narcissus.[2] There is some ground for thinking that Priscilla herself was a lady of noble birth.[3] The 'foreign superstition' attributed to Pomponia Græcina, 'insignis femina' as Tacitus calls her, wife of Aulus Plautius, the conqueror of Britain, is generally believed to have been the Christian religion. Lanciani avers that recent discoveries put the matter beyond doubt. An inscription, bearing the name Pomponios Grekeinos, has been found in the cemetery of Calixtus, together with other records of the Pomponii Attici and Bassi. "Some scholars think that Græcina, the wife of the conqueror of Britain, is no other than Lucina, the Christian matron who interred her brethren in Christ in her own property, at the second

[1] Gibbon, Smith's ed., ii. 166.

[2] This is assuming that Aristobulus, referred to in ch. xvi., was a scion of the house of Herod; and Narcissus, the favourite of Claudius.

[3] So Plumptre, *Biblical Studies*, pp. 422 sqq., and Hort, *Prolegomena*, pp. 12–14. On the other hand, Sanday and Headlam suggest that Aquila and Priscilla were freed members of a household of the Acilian gens, and think it "hardly probable that a noble Roman lady would travel about with a Jewish husband engaged in mercantile or even artisan work" (*Romans*, p. 420).

According to Lanciani, Aquila and Priscilla's home in Rome was on the spur of the Aventine which overlooks the Circus Maximus. Here they opened a small oratory—ecclesiam domesticam—in their house, one of the first opened to divine worship in Rome, and the walls of which are said to have been discovered in 1776 close to the church of S. Prisca. *Pagan and Christian Rome*, pp. 110–111.

milestone of the Appian Way."[1] A generation later the penetration to the higher circles became more marked, when many near relatives of the Emperors Vespasian and Domitian were condemned for 'atheism,' the common charge against the early Christians.[2] Lanciani (1892) declares that recent excavations in Rome give quite startling evidence of how the gospel found its way at an early period to the mansions of the great, and even to the palace of the Cæsars. He refers especially to inscriptions in the crypt of the Acilii Glabriones in the catacombs of St. Priscilla (Via Salaria), and in the catacombs of Prætextatus. He says: "I may also cite the names of several Cornelii, Cæcilii and Æmilii, the flower of Roman nobility, grouped near the graves of S. Cæcilia and Pope Cornelius; of Liberalis, a consul suffectus, and a martyr, whose remains were buried in the Via Salaria; of Julia Clementina, a relative of Jallius Bassus, consul before A.D. 161; of Catia Clementina, daughter or relative of Catius, consul A.D. 230, not to speak of personages of equestrian rank, whose names have been collected in hundreds."[3]

It was chiefly, however, among the poorer classes, among the slaves, the toilers, the oppressed and unhappy, that the religion that breathed of liberty and peace made at first its greatest advances. It was flung as a taunt against Christianity that it found its advocates among spinners, cobblers, and tanners, the most illiterate and clownish of men, and that these addressed themselves particularly to women and children.[4] Yet it was the glory of this religion that it demanded no external distinction as the passport to its kingdom, but rather answered "the cry of all tender and weary spirits." Its divine life

[1] Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome*, p. 9.

[2] It has been common in all ages to call 'atheists,' not those who denied God, but those who simply differed in their ideas of God. To the Brahmans Buddha was an atheist; to the Greeks, Socrates; to the Romans, the Christians; to the Christians, the Arians; to Servetus, Calvin; to Edinburgh Presbyterians of the seventeenth century, the Deists. Nor did the tendency stop even then. Cf. Max Müller, *Origin of Religion*, ed. 1891, pp. 311 sqq.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

[4] Cf. Patrick's *Apology of Origen*, pp. 38 and 249.

entered into the lowliest and most depressed conditions, and shone brilliantly in weak and despised vessels.[1]

Many have speculated on the causes of the rapid progress of Christianity in Rome. And no doubt it is important to account for the key that so admirably fitted the lock. Gibbon's ideas are well known. He writes of the zeal of the Christians, their doctrine of a future life, their miraculous powers, their austere virtue, their strong organisation. But these are 'causes' which themselves need to be accounted for. Strictly speaking, they are not really causes but effects. Even if they were operative forces the most marvellous thing about them is their coincidence. "Until this is explained, nothing is explained, and the question had better have been left alone. These presumed causes are quite distinct from each other, and the wonder is, what made them come together?"[2] What Gibbon could not bring himself to do, was the simplest and most natural thing of all—namely, to consider what the men who were engaged in the great work themselves said of it. They did not plume themselves on their zeal, or boast of their miraculous gifts. These were not the powers on which for a single moment they relied. But with a strange unanimity they spoke of Christ crucified, and Christ risen from the dead. They knew nothing among men, neither in dissolute Corinth nor in luxurious Rome, save this Christ. It was He who filled their minds, occupied their hearts, and smote all the deepest chords of their lives. Jesus, living a human life of perfect holiness and love, dying a death that bore away the sins of the world, and imparting a new power of grace and goodness to all who trusted Him, was the supreme source of their marvellous power. This was the key that fitted the wards —the Cross of Christ proving itself the power and the

[1] Cf. Neander, *Church History*, Bohn's ed., i. 107.

[2] Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, third ed., p. 451. Lecky, *Eur. Morals*, ch. iii., in accounting for the triumph of Christianity, moves along lines very similar to those of Gibbon. He writes eloquently of all the intrinsic excellences of the new religion, but the question still remains behind, how did it come to possess them?

wisdom of God; the uplifted Saviour beginning to draw all men to Himself. Mysterious, no doubt, but only with the mystery common to all the primal movements of the Divine Spirit.

This faith was already winning its way in Rome when Paul wrote his Epistle. There were labourers in the Roman Christian community whom the Apostle loved and trusted, and who were well qualified to lead the brethren to a high state of attainment. In the sixteenth chapter Paul sends greetings to a large number of these friends. It is a matter of debate, however, whether the passage containing the salutations is an integral part of the Epistle. It has been suggested that the Epistle was used as an Encyclical, and that this particular passage belonged to the copy sent to Ephesus. It is thought that when Paul wrote his Epistle he was much more likely to have had such a number and variety of friends in Ephesus than in Rome. However plausible such a conjecture may be, it scarcely entitles us to expunge the passage from our Epistle addressed to the Romans. The burden of proof really lies with the upholders of such a theory, to show that such a group of friends was impossible in Rome. Far from being impossible, however, it seems most probable.[1] The incessant intercourse between Rome and the great cities of the East, makes it perfectly conceivable that Paul in his labours in these cities had made many friends who afterwards went to Rome. Besides, in the sepulchral inscriptions on the Appian Way, which record the names of members of the Roman Imperial household, almost all the names here given, even the most peculiar of them, such as Tryphæna and Tryphosa, occur. This shows that such a mixture of nationalities as is indicated in the list, was quite possible in Rome, and certainly there was no city in the world where it was more likely. As to Aquila's presence in Rome, he seems to have been a

[1] On the incessant travelling to and fro during the first three centuries, and the share Christians took in it, see a paper by Zahn, *Skizzen aus dem Leben der Alten Kirche*, pp. 1–41, especially pp. 14–16. Cf. also Friedländer, II. ii., Die Reisen der Touristen, 4 and 5.

perfect nomad in his habits. A native of Pontus, he has business in Rome; leaves Rome for Corinth, labours there awhile, and then removes to Ephesus. His missionary zeal may have led to such movements, and the nature of his business may also have had something to do with them. It is quite natural that he should go back to the work he had left in Rome, say, when the death of Claudius, and the auspicious start of Nero's reign, opened a clear way.[1]

Conspicuous, then, among the friends now gathered in Rome were Aquila and Priscilla, whom Paul salutes as his "helpers in Christ Jesus," who (probably in Ephesus) had been ready to sacrifice their lives for his sake, and to whom all the Churches of the Gentiles owed a debt of deepest gratitude; Epænetus his well-beloved, first-fruits of Asia unto Christ; Andronicus and Junia, kinsmen and fellow-prisoners, who were of note among the Apostles, and converted to Christianity before him; Mary, Ampliatus, Urbanus, and Stachys, and many other devoted and approved labourers in the Lord. Paul greets no fewer than twenty-four by name, using terms of affection which show how intimately he had been related to them; while in addition there is the 'church in the house' of Aquila, the 'households' of Aristobulus and Narcissus, and the 'brethren' and 'all the saints' associated with other groups of friends. All this points to a thriving and well-rooted society of Christians, and it is plain that a large part of the Apostle's heart was in Rome. It is not to be

[1] Schulz, Ewald, Renan, Reuss, Weizsäcker, Farrar, Moffatt, and many others, hold the Ephesian theory. Cf. Renan, *St. Paul*, Introduction, pp. lxvi sqq.; Farrar, *Messages of the Books*, pp. 290–292. On the other side see Lightfoot, *Philippians*, pp. 171 sqq.; Gifford, *Romans*, pp. 20–30; Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, pp. xciii, 418 sqq.

Gifford makes the suggestion that the passage originally belonged to a *second letter* addressed by Paul to the Roman Church after his release from his first imprisonment at Rome.

On the question whether the last two chapters originally belonged to the Epistle, it is sufficient to refer to the discussion between Lightfoot and Hort, reprinted in Lightfoot's *Biblical Essays*, pp. 285–374. If the letter were used as an Encyclical, the division at the fourteenth chapter was probably due to the example of Marcion, who, according to Origen, "expunged and cut away the last two chapters."

wondered at, that he sought to communicate with his brethren there, to confirm them, to impart to them, even as he would have done by a visit, some spiritual gift, and himself to enjoy spiritual comfort in their mutual faith. Many might expect that he would now visit them, and friends so close and dear as some of them were, must have longed to see him again in the flesh. Compelled for the present to forgo so sincere a pleasure, he endeavours to make up for it by pouring out his heart in his great Epistle.

So far, his motive is perfectly simple and easy to comprehend. What is harder to understand, however, is why the Epistle took its distinctive form. This has become one of the vexed questions of Biblical Criticism. No less than sixty authorities have reasoned on it, and have all more or less differed in their solutions.[1] Is the motive polemical, eirenic, or dogmatic? Does Paul wish to confound opponents in Rome as in Galatia; or does he wish to bind contending parties together; or is it his purpose to present a reasoned and exhaustive system of Christian doctrine? Some look for the decisive elements of the problem in the peculiar circumstances of the Roman Church; and others seek to find them entirely in the Apostle's own mood of mind, and in the recent experiences of controversy through which he has passed. Probably both of these should be taken into account. It would be very strange if Paul wrote to his friends a mere theological treatise which had no reference whatever to their particular situation, and quite as strange if he wrote without being moved or influenced by the pressure of his own experiences. Most probably the prevailing element in the Roman Church was Gentile. The Epistle itself abundantly recognises its Gentile character. Nevertheless, the Church had sprung out of the synagogue, and there was in it a strong and influential Jewish element. Nor must we forget the large class of converted proselytes, who

[1] An interesting résumé of opinion on the subject is given by Godet in his *Introduction*, pp. 376 sqq.

would at least perfectly understand the repeated and familiar references to the Jewish Law.

It may possibly be inferred, too, that there was an ascetic tendency among the Roman Christians, and that, as in Corinth, though not perhaps for exactly similar reasons, it was possible to speak of those who were 'strong' and those who were 'weak' in respect of such external matters as meats and days. There were restless and excitable souls who needed to be warned that their subjection to the heavenly King did not absolve them from all obedience to their earthly rulers; and that it was incumbent on them to avoid giving offence to the world without. Still further, there were those who threatened to cause division on matters of doctrine, not serving the Lord Christ, but by fair speeches drawing away the simple from the faith.

It can scarcely be doubted that Paul, in this doctrinal danger, recognises the kind of opposition which his gospel had so abundantly met with in other fields from Jewish Christians. These certainly do not appear in open antagonism to him in Rome, but he has the profoundest reason to dread them. Sooner or later they will be there, as they have been elsewhere, and although the whole tone of his Epistle shows that he is perfectly conscious that many to whom he is writing are friendly and like-minded, yet the enemies of the gospel of faith are to be looked for and met by anticipation. The Apostle's mind is still heavy with the burden of his relation to his Jewish brethren. He knows the sleepless and obstinate nature of their opposition to the characteristic features of his gospel. It is good that from his own hand the friends in Rome should know what these features really are. They do not need to be instructed in the elements of the faith, and he can well afford in writing to them to take for granted many of the first principles of their religion. But they do not all understand the ground of liberty in Christ Jesus, for which it has been his special life-work to contend, namely, the doctrine that Christ is "the end of the Law unto righteousness to every one that believeth." Solemnly and

earnestly, and with great care and skill, he enters into this matter; and all the more earnestly because he feels that, strong as his hope is that he may "see Rome also," it is quite possible that he may be disappointed in his desire to visit them. His face must be turned to Jerusalem, and God only knows the issue of that journey. Even now rumours are in the air of an enmity that is plotting against his life. If it be God's will that he should never see Rome, then let his friends there, in a Church which is so dear to his heart, and which, situated in the Capital of the world, has so sure and influential a future before it, receive from him now, as it were a sacred legacy, the clear enunciation of truths that he holds more precious than life.

Along with this, Paul wishes his readers to understand what his real feelings to his Jewish brethren are, and what he believes are God's deep meanings of love in all His dealings with them. God is his witness that he longs for the salvation of Israel, and that he believes it will be accomplished. It is his fond desire to keep on terms of amity with Jerusalem. Even now he is preparing to take thither large gifts from the Gentile Churches, to show that at bottom they are in the profoundest sympathy. At whatever risk, he will do this personally, that no man may say his heart is not in it, for even as Israel has its place in the love of God, so has it deeply in his.

Thus, in the calm of his winter stay in Corinth, in the hospitable house of Gaius, and surrounded by many friends, Paul prepares his message for the Christians in Rome. It is needless to say it is worthy of the great cause in which it was written, transcending in importance all the other Epistles, and well fitted to exert the profoundest influence on the thought and life of the Christian world.

## II.

## THE EPISTLE.

### 1. The Gospel of Salvation (Chs. i.–viii.).

One must always approach an exposition of the Epistle to the Romans with extreme diffidence. Great intellects, like those of Augustine and Luther and Calvin, have discussed it only to discover depths beyond their depths; and many Christian philosophers, pursuing its themes of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate, "fixed fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute," have found themselves "in wandering mazes lost." Coleridge spoke of it as "the profoundest book in existence." "At every word," says one of the best of our modern commentators, "we feel ourselves face to face with the unfathomable." He compares it to that great masterpiece of architecture, the Cathedral of Milan, where we do not know which to admire most, "the majesty of the whole or the finish of the details, and where every look makes the discovery of some new perfection."[1]

The Epistle, indeed, raises some of the hardest questions in religion and philosophy, and it does so in a way that has led to innumerable divergences of interpretation. Every chapter, almost every verse, is strewn with the relics of contending theologians and rival sects. Creeds the most radically opposed equally claim it as their basis and authority; and, while all honour it, few are in complete harmony as to the significance of its parts, and their bearing on one another. Some exaggerate a word or a phrase into an extreme importance, and base on it doctrines of the most uncompromising description; and others pass

[1] Godet. When Professor Godet was lecturing on Romans, and preparing his Commentary, he told the present writer that there were passages in the Epistle on which he had written ten times, and even then was not satisfied. He specially referred to the immense difficulty of the fifth chapter.

by distasteful or puzzling passages, as if they were no more than mere padding or dubious Orientalisms. The keynote is said to be now here, now there; and while some push the Apostle along narrow paths to issues he probably never dreamt of, others feel constrained by him to accept positions to which they never thought of being committed. The knowledge of all this tends to produce a feeling of paralysing carefulness, so that it becomes possible to miss the guidance of the Epistle, in over anxiety to discern the pitfalls into which its interpreters have fallen. Yet it ought not to be impossible to set forth the main drift of the Epistle, without finding it necessary to apologise for the Apostle at every step.

Paul begins with greetings to his readers, putting himself in kindly touch with them by speaking of their mutual faith, and of the deep interest he has in their well-being. His introduction is rather longer and more elaborate than usual. Doubtless this is due to the fact that his mind is already full of the solemnity of the subject he means to handle; and partly also because he feels that many whom he addresses will hear him for the first time, are strangers to him, and strangers dwelling in Imperial Rome. This makes him slightly formal, as if he were particular at the outset to define clearly his relations and theirs to the Lord Jesus and to each other. He was called to be an Apostle; they were called to be saints; and both are believers in the gospel of God concerning Jesus Christ, who according to the flesh was of the seed of David, but according to the spirit of holiness was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead. Was it not natural that, as the Apostle of the Gentiles, he should seek to have some fruit among them even as among other Gentiles? For this end he had greatly desired, and still desired, to preach among them. He would impart to them some spiritual gift, and he would also receive from them, what they were well able to impart, stimulus and comfort in the common faith; for it was well known, and he never ceased to thank God for it, that their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world. He was ready,

then, if only he had opportunity, to preach the gospel to them that were in Rome also.

This leads him directly to specify the subject on which he means to write. It concerns the gospel of Christ, which he would have delivered by word of mouth if he could, which was spoken against in many places, but which he would not be ashamed to declare even in the great Capital itself. He defines it in a few pregnant words (vv. 16–17). It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth—offered naturally, in point of time, first to the Jew in whose land it originated, but offered to the Greeks, the Gentiles, also. And it is a gospel of salvation, because in it there is revealed what humanity has hitherto sought for in vain—righteousness: a "righteousness of God," or from God, by faith, offered to the acceptance of faith. Foreshadowing this, the Scripture itself had said: The Righteous shall live by faith.

The theme, therefore, to be unfolded is the gospel of Salvation by Faith.

From this theme the Epistle never diverges. From beginning to end it is a unity. There are, however, three well-marked divisions in the treatment. The first runs on to the end of the eighth chapter, and is a general exposition of what Paul means by his gospel; the second, which includes three chapters, the ninth, tenth, and eleventh, shows the historical relation of the gospel to mankind, especially to the Jews; the third, in the remaining chapters, indicates the practical application of the gospel in the Christian life.

First, then, we have to deal with the exposition of the gospel of Salvation by Faith, as given in the first eight chapters.

Here, again, we are able to recognise a threefold division. (1) To the twentieth verse of the third chapter, the Apostle is occupied in showing the need of this salvation; (2) thereafter, to the close of the fifth chapter, he shows how it has become possible, and may be received (Justification); and (3) in the sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters, he treats of the process of its perfection in the

believer (Sanctification). We may briefly summarise these stages of his exposition as, *the need of salvation, its reception, and its completion.*

The general line of thought in these eight chapters is well given in the following easy and rapid summary by Matthew Arnold: "The first chapter is to the Gentiles. Its purport is: You have not righteousness. The second is to the Jews; and its purport is: No more have you, though you think you have. The third chapter announces faith in Christ as the one source of righteousness for all men. The fourth chapter gives to the notion of righteousness through faith the sanction of the Old Testament and of the history of Abraham. The fifth insists on the causes for thankfulness and exultation in the boon of righteousness through faith in Christ; and applies illustratively, with this design, the history of Adam. The sixth chapter comes to the all-important question: 'What *is* that faith in Christ which I, Paul, mean?'—and answers it. The seventh illustrates and explains the answer. But the eighth, down to the end of the twenty-eighth verse, develops and completes the answer. The rest of the eighth chapter expresses the sense of safety and gratitude which the solution is fitted to inspire."[1]

## (A) *The need of Salvation* (Chs. i.–iii. 20).

We have first, then, to follow the Apostle in his demonstration of the need of humanity for the gospel of salvation. The whole world, he declares, is lying under the doom of the divine displeasure, for the holy anger of God is revealed in the deep sinfulness into which mankind has sunk.

1. *The need of the Gentiles.* He points to the moral and spiritual condition of the Gentile world. We must carefully note the way in which he presents this.

[1] *St. Paul and Protestantism*, popular ed., 1887, pp. 63–64. Mr. Arnold's literary instinct was unerring, although one must often differ from him in his interpretation of the Epistle. The chief fault of his brilliant essay is the application of a fundamental principle which leads him to discount whatever appears transcendent and unverifiable by experience. His criterion results too often in cavalier dismissals which really prove nothing, and had it been consistently carried out, it would have stripped the poet-critic himself of much—ideals and deep insights—which he would not have cared to dispense with.

(1) First he speaks of the Gentile knowledge of God. This is important; it is indeed the basis of the condemnation of the Gentiles, for if they had never known God they could never have been charged with the guilt of offending Him. But how had they known God? He had revealed Himself to them by the works of His hands. The whole creation had been eloquent to them with its thousand tongues. By earnest reflection on the structure and order of the great world in which they were placed, they had been able to infer His eternal power as well as other attributes of His divine nature.[1] They had perceived enough to lead them to adore Him and to lift up their hearts to Him in thanksgiving. Paul's speeches in Lystra and Athens find their echo here. He pointed to the God who had made the world, and who had not left Himself without witness, in that He did good, filling men's hearts with food and gladness. We are reminded, too, how similar his expressions are to those in the apocryphal Book of the Wisdom of Solomon; and no doubt Paul knew that book, although his ideas in this passage are far in advance of it.

The world, therefore, had known God. He had manifested Himself to the understanding and consciousness of His children in the open book of creation. It is not necessary to discuss the question whether the primitive religion of mankind was natural or revealed. The study of human history makes it perfectly clear that, whatever else man may be, he is essentially a religious being, and that impelled by his own native instincts, he ever seeks God "if haply he may feel after Him and find Him."[2] Far as they may have drifted apart, "God and man are, as it were, old friends. . . . Man away from God and having

[1] On the significance of θειότης cf. Trench, *N.T. Synonyms*, pp. 6–9.

[2] Cf. De la Saussaye, *Science of Religion*, chs. iii. and vi., and references; and Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, i. 377 sqq., on the universality of religious ideas. "The thoughts and principles of modern Christianity," says Tylor, "are attached to intellectual clues which run back through far præ-Christian ages to the very origin of human civilisation, perhaps even of human existence" (p. 381). Also Salmond, *Immortality*, bk. i. ch. ii.

lost sight of Him, is as constantly persuaded that He is opening a way back to Himself, as it were, giving signals and beckoning from the darkness in which He dwells." [1] Whether these intimations are gathered from nature or experience they are entitled in a perfectly true sense to be called revelations of God, and 'natural religion' and 'revealed religion' have one Source. For Paul's present purpose it is sufficient to assert the fact that the Gentiles possessed lofty conceptions of God, which nevertheless had not proved to them the way of salvation. This true knowledge had been attained very largely through a right apprehension of the natural world, which in all ages has been the 'living garment' men have seen God by.

Since the days of Kant, however, it has been customary to acknowledge that arguments for the existence of God drawn from nature are logically halting and incomplete. Logical demonstration is really impossible from the nature of the case. An Infinite Being can never be logically comprehended in any arguments which the human mind can frame. But this is not to deny that such arguments are possessed of very great force. No one ever admitted this more fully than Kant himself. Granted that the physico-theological 'proof,' based on the constitution and disposition of the phenomena of the present world, is in itself insufficient, inasmuch as it proves the existence rather of a Designer of the world than of an all-sufficient Creator, it has nevertheless an irresistible cogency and authority.

"Everywhere around us," says Kant, "we observe a chain of causes and effects, of means and ends, of death and birth; and, as nothing has entered of itself into the condition in which we find it, we are constantly referred to some other thing, which itself suggests the same inquiry regarding its cause, and thus the universe must sink into the abyss of nothingness, unless we admit that, besides this infinite chain of contingencies, there exists something that is primal and self-subsistent—something which, as the cause

[1] Wallace, *Lects. and Essays on Natural Theol. and Ethics*, p. 192.

of this phenomenal world, secures its continuance and preservation. . . . It would be utterly hopeless to attempt to rob this argument of the authority it has always enjoyed. The mind, unceasingly elevated by these considerations, which, although empirical, are so remarkably powerful, and continually adding to their force, will not suffer itself to be depressed by the doubts suggested by subtle speculation; it tears itself out of this state of uncertainty, the moment it casts a look upon the wondrous form of nature and the majesty of the universe, and rises from height to height, from condition to condition, till it has elevated itself to the supreme and unconditioned author of all."[1]

It would rather indeed be wholly irrational to refuse a conclusion to which reason itself so universally points. Our minds are so constituted that it is their natural and everyday occupation to argue from the seen to the unseen, and to pass from the adaptations of nature to the cause that lies behind. Hence the argument from the work to the Worker, from nature to God, has an invincible attraction. The greatest thinkers of the world have been impressed by it, and we may be sure it will always hold its place in men's minds. It exists as a fundamental element in every historic religion in the world, and of nothing may it be more truly said: "Securus judicat orbis terrarum."[2]

But if the knowledge of God derived from nature and from conscience—for Paul's reference to the moral side of the question must not be overlooked (ch. ii. 14–15)—is thus a reality, a few brief references may help to illustrate how the Apostle's assertion that the Gentiles possessed

[1] *Kritik of Pure Reason*, Bohn's ed., pp. 382, 383. Kant in a later passage also uses the following language: "Teleological unity is so important a condition of the application of my reason to nature, that it is impossible for me to ignore it. . . . But the sole condition, so far as my knowledge extends, under which this unity can be my guide in the investigation of nature, is the assumption that a supreme intelligence has ordered all things according to the wisest ends. . . . The expression of belief, in such a case, is an expression of modesty from the *objective* point of view, but, at the same time, of firm confidence, from the *subjective*" (pp. 500, 501).

[2] Cf. Orr, *Christian View of God and the World*, Lect. III. and notes; Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, bk. i. ch. i.; Illingworth, *Personality Human and Divine*, Lect. IV.; Caird, *Philosophy of Religion*, ch. v.; Pfleiderer, *Philosophy of Religion*, iii. 253 sqq.; Flint, *Theism*, Lect. III.

such knowledge is historically verifiable. Paul is writing from a Greek city, and he is writing to Rome. Long ages before he wrote, the Aryan race, from which both Greeks and Romans sprang, had conquered for itself a home in the Punjab. In the hymns of the Veda their religious thoughts and ideas, based on a keen observation of the principles of nature and the order of the world, have been handed down to us. If we cannot say that they convey a pure monotheism, they yet show no mean approach to such a conception.[1] "What more could human language achieve in trying to express the idea of a divine and supreme power, than what a poet sings of Varuna: 'Thou art lord of all, of heaven and earth; thou art the king of all, of those who are gods, and of those who are men'? Or again: 'To whom shall we sacrifice? He through whom the sky is bright and the earth fair; He to whom heaven and earth, standing firm by His will, look up, trembling inwardly; He the righteous, who created the heavens; He also created the bright and mighty waters.'"[2] The omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence of deity are expressed in the Vedas in language not unlike that of many of the Hebrew psalms; and many of the hymns are prayers, longings of the human spirit for the divine blessing, for the forgiveness of sins, for the restoration of peace. Morality and religion are also closely allied, at least in the later hymns. There is a deep sense of guilt, a recognition of the necessity of faith, and even the doctrine of immortality glimmers like a star through the gloom. Let a thousand years pass, and come down to the Greek descendants of that Aryan race in their European home. Has the light grown dim or faded away? It

[1] Henotheism, in Max Müller's sense, *i.e.* not one only God, but one God thought of at the moment of worship as supreme above all others.

[2] Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, i. 26–27; cf. also his Lectures on the *Origin of Religion*, *The Science of Religion*, *Natural Theology*, etc.; Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, *passim*; Pfleiderer, *Phil. of Religion*, iii. ch. ii.; Tiele, *History of Religion*, ch. iv., and article in *Ency. Brit.*; and Barth, *Religions of India*, who, however, does not regard the Vedic hymns as expressions of a popular religion, but as the refinements of an initiated or priestly caste.

shines with even greater splendour and power. "When we ascend to the most distant heights of Greek history," writes Max Müller, "the idea of God, as the supreme Being, stands before us as a simple fact."[1] Polytheism no doubt abounded, yet Plato speaks of "the Kingly Spirit and living creator of the world." "What is the true conception of Deity?" asks Celsus. "I state nothing new—only traditional beliefs long admitted. God is good, and beautiful, and blessed, and possesses these qualities in perfection." And in so saying he was drawing on his knowledge of the *Phædo* of Plato.[2] All readers of Xenophon's *Memorabilia* remember how Socrates recognised the designing wisdom of the Deity in His works. "As a historical fact," says Dr. Flint, "reason in Greece had discovered the chief theistic proofs still employed, and attained in many minds nearly the same belief in God as now prevails."[3] "The whole tendency of Greek philosophy," writes Professor Wallace, "was to conceive a God as the great principle of the natural order, as the supreme reality, as the object of all objects. He is the order, or He is the source and author of the order, of the physical universe. He is the supreme condition, on which for the philosopher depends the intelligibility of nature, the final source of all its movement, the goal of all its becoming."[4] Finally, come down some centuries later, and in that very Rome to which Paul is writing the light is still shining through all the denseness of the murky night. Cicero believed that the order implanted by God on the world without, was to be imitated in the order and consistency of human lives; and almost at the very hour of Paul's Epistle, Seneca was writing Epistles of his own, in which we have the most striking and deep-felt notes on human weakness, the impossibility of self-salvation, along with a recognition of God as the perfect Spirit, the supreme all-knowing, wise and kind Reason, which orders and rules

[1] *Chips*, ii. 151, reviewing Welcker's *Mythology*.
[2] Patrick's *Apology of Origen*, p. 42.
[3] *Theism*, p. 24.
[4] *Lects. and Essays*, p. 37.

all things according to a purpose, and cherishes a fatherly care for men.[1]

Such illustrations help to justify the first important step in the Apostle's argument. The light had come even into the Gentile world. The truth was reached, whatever men made of it. Whether it should grow from more to more, or be repressed in unrighteousness, was the all-important question. And it is something to know, what a glance into the history of mankind reveals, that "at no time and in no part of the world, has God left Himself without a witness, that His hand was nowhere beyond the reach of the outstretched hands of babes and sucklings."[2]

(2) The Apostle takes the next step in his argument —there was a turning away from the light. The Gentile knowledge of the truth was repressed. What had been attained was not fostered, confirmed and developed, but gave place to vain reasonings and foolish imaginations. The higher was hard to hold; the lower was easy and popular; and, with Greek natures at least, a sensuous idolatry was æsthetically alluring, and consequently capable of a quick apology. We must note that the knowledge of God is not represented as departed from because it was imperfect, but because there was that in man which seduced him from it, and led him to despise it. It is not weighed in the balance and found wanting; it is simply put away that baser things may take its place. It is like the spiritual worship of David sinking into the Baal and Ashtaroth worship of Ahab; or the religion of the Upanishads exchanged for the grovelling animal worship of many modern Hindus. The tendency is in the human heart. Paul sees "the glory of the incorruptible God" changed "for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." He was doubtless thinking of the anthropomorphism so characteristic of the Greek religion, and of the animal worship which the spread of the Egyptian cults was making fashion-

[1] Pfleiderer, *Phil. of Religion*, iii. 115.
[2] Max Müller, Preface to *Collected Works* (1898), p. xix.

able all over the Roman world. The latter seems very difficult to account for. Herodotus says that the Thebans believed that in answer to the human longing, God veiled Himself in the covering of an animal, and so came near to man. The mysterious being and instincts of the animal creation, apparently so unintelligible, may also have helped to confirm the notion that the beasts were the dwelling-place of spiritual beings, who used them as a means of coming into close relations with humanity. At all events the cult developed most elaborately. The sacred animals were luxuriously housed and fed, while there were multitudes of men and women whose sole duty was to look after them, and whose office was sacred and hereditary. Incense was burnt before them; they were washed, anointed, richly apparelled, and slept at night on soft cushions. As each house and family had its holy beast, the sorrow when it died was like that for a beloved child. If a cat died, all the members of the household shaved their eyebrows; but if a dog died they shaved their heads and their whole bodies.[1]

The effect on morals was direct and disastrous. Men do not rise above the level of their gods. It is impossible to describe the sinful degradation that was associated with the idolatries of which Paul speaks. The immoralities of the Pantheon and the temples were naturally reflected in the lives of the worshippers. The whole system moved in a vicious circle: first men imputed vices to the gods, and then they indulged in these vices with a divine sanction. The Apostle only spoke what he knew and testified what he had seen, when he wrote of the uncleanness and dishonour and perversion of pagan life; and no dweller in that great city to which he wrote, and which had become the sink into which all the dregs of the licentious East had poured, would ever have ventured to deny the truthfulness of the picture which he drew.

[1] Döllinger, *Gentile and Jew*, i. 454 sqq.; Rawlinson, *Herodotus*, ii. 77 and 110–111; Wilkinson, *Ancient Egypt*, ed. 1878, iii. 250–257, and ch. xiv. generally.

(3) The next thing, however, to observe is that Paul represents this degradation not merely as the natural consequence of idolatry, but as the judicial consequence inflicted by God. This is the third step in his argument—the doom of the God-forsaken life. Three times he declares, "God gave them up." They refused to have Him in their knowledge, and the awful result was that He left them to pursue their downward course to its bitter end. "Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone." If we understand it, it is the most terrible sentence that can be spoken over the lives of sinful men. And yet, do not let us think, fearful as it is, that there is in it the least atom of vindictiveness. It is more in sorrow than in anger that the father gives the prodigal his portion, and suffers him to wander into the far country. And there is love in it too. For that wretched son, it is the long way round that will be the shortest way home. The famine and the companionship of beasts, doom though they be, are also the means of awaking a great cry, and a blessed longing to arise and cast himself again on his father's breast.

Glancing back for a moment on this whole passage, we should be careful not to mistake what the Apostle has done. He has not been showing the imperfections of the Gentile knowledge of God. That would be a misunderstanding. It is essential to his argument that this knowledge was true and good. The hinge on which everything turns is the forsaking of the knowledge. Evil tendencies in human nature may account for it; but Paul at the moment is not seeking to account for it; he is simply observing it and asserting it. It is no argument, however, to say that as the sins of men under the Christian dispensation are appalling and widespread, therefore the impotence of Christianity to save is equally demonstrated. Where Christianity does not save, Christianity has not been truly tried. The theism of the Gentiles failed, so far, for a like reason; not because its light was delusive, but because its light was not used. The two things to this extent are perfectly parallel. Would it have been sufficient, then, if paganism had been leavened simply with its own theistic

truth? That is a different question. Paul's answer to it would have been an emphatic negative. History would only have repeated itself. Theism would have succumbed once more to the evil tendencies of human nature. The supreme value and distinction of his gospel were, that it came with new elements and greater powers, to fight a winning battle against the evils which the heart had not previously been able to withstand. It was the power of God towards an end which the power of man had failed to reach.

Nor is Paul to be understood to mean that the Gentile world of which he wrote, was lying in universal wickedness, unredeemed by even a single ray of human goodness. In the next chapter he speaks of Gentiles who by nature keep the law of conscience; and, as we have seen, it would be a gross error to ignore the Gentile lives that rose in many respects far above the sinful degradation which has been depicted. But even judging paganism by these, we must remember that the best of them are just those who are keenest and most intense in their acknowledgment of all-pervading sin. Indeed it is only from the best we should expect such cries and confessions; yet these differ from the lamentations of an earnest Christian, say, like the Apostle himself, in this essential respect, that *they have no hope*. Hence the Roman sages were merely philosophers, never prophets. Paul confessed indwelling sin as sadly as Seneca ever did; but Paul had hope where Seneca saw none. That was the mighty difference, and but for that Paul would never have put his pen to the description of pagan iniquity. It was because he knew and believed in a way of salvation, that he suffered himself to dwell on a theme in itself so utterly dismal and repulsive. The deep darkness existed beyond all controversy, and he approached it with no mere historic interest, but as a joyful evangelist who was able to flash into it 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.'

2. *The need of the Jews.* There was another class of

men whom Paul had to consider. The world was divided by him, as regards religion, into two sections, the Gentiles and the Jews; those who had merely the light common to all humanity, and those who had received a special revelation of God. What of the Jews? Had they, in spite of all their privileges, failed to attain righteousness, and were they, in God's sight, in the very same need of salvation as the Gentiles? With this side of the question he now deals.

The Jew, as Paul well knows, reckons himself, in relation to God, an exception to all the rest of the world. He agrees heartily with all that has been said of the Gentiles, but the matter only ministers to his conceit, and never touches his conscience. He lifts up his eyes, and thanks God he is not as 'this publican.' It cannot be an easy task to arouse a sense of the need of the gospel in such circumstances, but the Apostle attempts it with very great skill.

He approaches his subject indirectly, desiring first of all to establish a general principle. Suppose a man assenting to what has been said, assuming a critical attitude and saying, 'That is exactly my judgment on this sin-steeped paganism'; and suppose that in point of fact these very sins are not alien to his own life, that he is just as guilty of them as those whom he condemns—will his mere assumption of superiority excuse him? Let it be the case that he has hitherto escaped punishment; that God in mercy and longsuffering has delayed his doom; but that instead of such Divine forbearance leading him to repentance, it is actually misinterpreted as favouritism and indulgence—will not that be the greatest aggravation of his sin? The general principle on which we must stand is this—that God will render to every man according to his works. The Divine judgment will base itself on conduct, and will proceed impartially without respect of persons; blessed for all who do well, terrible for all who transgress, whether they be Jews who have had an express Law such as that of Moses, or whether they be Gentiles who have had a law of conscience written in

their hearts: all alike shall come at last under the judgment of the unerring God.[1]

Having advanced under cover of this general principle, axiomatic even in Jewish eyes, the Apostle (ii. 17) suddenly unmasks his battery, and turns with dramatic directness to the Jew. There are two chief props on which the Jew rests—the Law and Circumcision, and Paul sweeps each of these in turn from beneath his feet. Both might be of supreme value did the Jew maintain a state of perfect righteousness, but neither will help him much in a state of flagrant transgression. What gain can it be to boast in the Law, and strut in vain pride over one's higher knowledge and clearer light, if the Law is broken to pieces every day, and if the knowledge and the light are openly contradicted by the conduct? You preach honesty, and are yourselves dishonest; you preach purity, and are yourselves defiled; you disdain idols, but you pilfer from their temples; you praise the Law, and at the same time bring it into such dishonour that the very heathen mock and blaspheme! Again, you say you are circumcised, that you bear upon your very bodies the seal and pledge of the Divine Covenant. What an idle dream to think that this can save you, when on your side the Covenant itself is shattered into a thousand fragments! It is in the heart of goodness and obedience that the Lord looks for the true marks of His children. Whence it may happen that a Gentile, obeying the Divine Will, may have the 'circumcision of the heart,' while a Jew, defying that

[1] It is sometimes alleged that there is a contradiction here to the doctrine of Justification by Faith. This is not really so. Two things may be noted: (1) Paul wishes the Jew to feel that even on a standard which he accepts, he cannot be justified; and he here asserts that standard in the form of a general moral principle freely acknowledged in the Old Testament. Cf. Job xxxiv. 11; Ps. lxii. 12; Jer. xvii. 10 and xxxii. 19; Ezek. vii. 27 and xxxiii. 20. (2) Good works really occupy a most important place in Paul's system; but he believes they are possible only as the result of certain religious conditions which are not here under consideration, but which he will explain when he comes to treat of Sanctification. If, under faith, there be not the good fruits for which the Master looks, it will simply prove that the faith has been an insincerity.

Will, may put himself into that very category on which he lavishes so much disdain. A doer of the same things as the heathen, a transgressor of the Law, a breaker of the Covenant—these are the dark reflections in the moral mirror in which the Apostle challenges the Jew to behold himself.

But a question starts to his mind, on which he will fix attention for a moment (iii. 1–8). Indeed it will occur to most minds. 'What then is the use of the Jew ever having had any privileges? You talk of acknowledged privileges, and then prove that they are powerless for salvation.' Modern Christianity is quite familiar with the same question: 'What is the good of the Sacrament or the means of grace? If they are not essential to salvation, why make such insistence on their importance? I was baptized and I have partaken of the Communion and instead of securing me, these things, I am now told, may only prove my greater condemnation.'

Paul, therefore, raises a very common objection when he says: "What advantage is there in being a Jew?" It is a question that probably occurred to him at his own conversion when he gave up resting on the Law. He may have thought much of it 'in Arabia,' and certainly he would have to deal with it daily when he began to preach the gospel. His present treatment of it is very brief and succinct, and therefore a little difficult to grasp. The reason is that he only touches the matter now *en passant*, and that he means to handle the same difficulties with greater fulness, when he comes to speak of the Election of Israel (chs. ix.–xi.), and when he discusses the charge of antinomianism so commonly made against his gospel (ch. vi.). Meanwhile the key to the passage is this ruling idea—the Jew wishes to wriggle out of the position that he, a chosen child, will come under the wrath and condition of God like a common mortal; and Paul on the other hand wishes to prevent such an escape. The Jew has privileges, and yet God is perfectly justified in judging and punishing unbelieving and unrighteous Jews. Such is the Apostle's contention.

Paul freely grants that many advantages lie on the side of the Jews. He does not now catalogue these, but contents himself for the moment by naming the pertinent and pre-eminent one, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God. The phrase is comprehensive, but it here practically points to the promises and prophecies regarding the Messiah. This is clear from the 'unbelief' immediately spoken of. The Jews are not guilty of disbelieving all the Divine revelation, but in Paul's view they are guilty of rejecting the Messiah, that is, Jesus. Here, then, arises a short series of casuistical objections, which Paul in swift phrases demolishes one after another.

The Jews have the promises, and yet some Jews reject them as fulfilled in Jesus. If it be granted that that fulfilment occurred, does it not appear as if the unbelief of such Jews had brought to naught God's fidelity to His word? Nay, but God in His own time and way, even by the gospel, will be found true, though not 'some' merely, but all men were to prove false. Further, it will be objected: 'If our unrighteousness serves, as you say, to commend the righteousness of God, where is the justice of God in punishing us for what results in His glory?' (But Paul apologises for speaking of the Almighty in this familiar manner.) The question may seem to cut deep, but it is sheer madness. In the first place, it does not distinguish between results which God secures, and iniquities for whose guilt the sinner is responsible. If this responsibility were to be lost sight of, simply because it pleases God to bring good out of evil, there would be no Judgment of the world possible; whereas nothing is more certainly believed among us than the Divine Judgment. But more than that, if the objection is baseless from the point of view of a God who judges, it is in the second place vicious from the point of view of the sinner himself. Why? Because it would land him in the grossest moral perversion. It would lead him to say, 'Let us do evil that good may come.' This is a favourite slander, says Paul, to hurl at my head; I could say much upon it, and do not mean to let it pass; but for the

present I will only say this, that the condemnation that will come on every man who can so believe, will be richly deserved.

This brief discussion has been a digression, though a very important one, and the Apostle resumes his argument at the ninth verse, only to sum up on the whole general question of the common guilt of Gentile and Jew. They are all under sin. And, as he loves to do, he bases himself on Scripture, drawing forth from its pages verse after verse, to show that seers and prophets of old had the same conviction, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world brought under the judgment of God."

The first part of the great argument is thus completed. The universal reign of sin is the dark and stormy prelude to the revelation of the gospel. In no section of the human race is there to be found justifying righteousness in the sight of God. In proving this Paul has been content simply to appeal to experience, and to point to facts which it is impossible to deny. How these facts should be as they are, whence their universal source, he does not inquire. He has ideas on these points, and some of them are expressed in the Epistle. The origin of sin he never discusses, but he believes that it entered into the world by the fall of Adam, and that it has established its chief seat in human flesh. For the present it is enough to show that by the works of the Law, by conduct in the light of manifest knowledge, no living soul can be regarded as righteous in God's sight.

How, then, shall a man be just with God? Is it ever possible to return to a reconciled life, and to be delivered from the burden of guilt and the Divine condemnation—"the revelation of wrath"? Paul believes that it is, and the constant joy of his life is to declare his faith. It is the new "revelation of the righteousness of God."

### (B) *The Reception of Salvation.* (*Justification by Faith*, Chs. iii. 21–v.)

Paul now begins to set forth the first essential part of

his gospel—even the righteousness which God has now revealed, and which is by faith in Christ. Starting at the twenty-first verse of the third chapter, the section extends to the close of the fifth chapter. It contains the very core of the Pauline message. The first few verses (iii. 21–26) have provoked volumes of controversy, and all that the Apostle himself has subsequently to say in this part of his Epistle, amounts only to their elucidation and defence.

It was at the twenty-fifth verse that Luther scored his Bible, and wrote his marginal note: "Merke dies; this is the chief point and the very central place of the Epistle, and of the whole Bible." Calvin wrote of the twenty-fourth and following verses: "There is probably no passage in the whole Bible that more exhaustively exhibits the justifying righteousness of God." "This whole period," says Melanchthon, "contains the very head and front of Paul's discussion." According to Stolz, it is the quintessence of the Pauline doctrine concerning Christ: "Whosoever understands it, understands the Apostle; whosoever misunderstands it, runs the risk of misunderstanding the entire Epistle." Infinitely precious in every phrase, the passage has been abundantly used of God in converting and comforting the troubled souls of men.

"It was in the twenty-fifth verse that the poet Cowper found peace to his spirit, after it had well-nigh drifted into utter despair." "I flung myself," he says, "into a chair near the window, and seeing a Bible there, ventured once more to apply to it for comfort and instruction. The first verse I saw was the 25th of the 3rd of Romans:—'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.' Immediately I received strength to believe, and the full beams of the Sun of Righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement He had made for my pardon and complete justification. In a moment I believed, and received the peace of the gospel."—"Unless," he adds, "the Almighty arm had been under me, I think I should have been overwhelmed with gratitude and joy. But the work of the Holy

Spirit is best described in His own words;—it is 'joy unspeakable and full of glory.'" [1]

Let us endeavour briefly to paraphrase this famous passage, taking with it the supplementary verses of the fifth chapter (6–11).

By the works of the law, whether it be the law of Moses or the law written in the human heart, no flesh can be justified. The condemnation of God hangs over all. But, says the Apostle triumphantly, "a righteousness of God" has been revealed! What man could not achieve, God in His infinite love and wisdom has provided. Though it be apart from law, do not let us scout it, for even those who revere the Scriptures will find, if they look deeply, that the Law and the Prophets themselves bear witness to it. I speak of that particular 'righteousness' which has a divine and not a human origin, and in virtue of which God accepts all without distinction who believe in Christ. All need it, and all may have it, for it is offered freely by His grace to Jew and Gentile alike. Because of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, God holds all who believe as 'righteous.' This may seem a momentous issue, but it flows from a momentous fact—even the blood of Jesus the Messiah. Jesus lifted up on the Cross, —what was that but God openly displaying Him as a propitiatory sacrifice which all men might behold? And why? For two great ends: in the first place, to manifest the essential Righteousness of the Almighty, lest men should think He paid small regard to sin, because they misinterpreted His tender forbearance in bygone times in not visiting human iniquities as perfect Righteousness might seem to require; and in the second place, and as a direct consequence of that Righteousness, that He might be able to regard all those as delivered from the guilt of sin who by faith identify themselves with the crucified Jesus. Most gloriously hath God commended His un-

[1] Taylor's *Life of Cowper*, pp. 37–38, ed. 1835. This and the preceding quotations are from Morison, *Romans Third*, pp. 269–272.

speakable love! For while we were yet sinners, lying under wrath, Christ died for us. Resting in this great love, we are bold to believe that if even now we are reconciled by so great a sacrifice as the Redeemer's death, much more, looking forward to eternity, shall we be saved from wrath in the day of Judgment on account of our participation in His perfect life.

The grand theme of this passage, it will be seen, is Redemption by faith, and the ground on which it rests is the Redeemer's death. In the Divine Holiness there is an inherent antagonism to human sin, and if men doubted it before—because God waited for the fulness of time to display it—they can doubt it no longer. But the death on Calvary was no mere scenic display; it was profoundly real, and as such was of transcendent moment. It was the climax of the suffering humiliation of a holy and Divine Being, who voluntarily identified Himself with humanity that He might bear its burden. It was not on His own account He died, but as a supreme and perfect sacrifice for others, in virtue of which the remission of their sins might become possible. Men were guilty, and the Cross did not by any mysterious internal change make them good; but it made it possible for God in His majesty and holiness not merely to forgive, as men speak of forgiveness, but, deeper and more blessed still, to pass by and obliterate human guilt itself. Identifying themselves with Jesus by a lowly faith, believers become free as those who are 'bought with a price.' The cloud of Divine wrath, at first in human history no bigger than a man's hand, has risen, revealed itself, darkened the whole sky, burst over the Cross and rolled away. On Calvary there is the clear shining after the rain, and men, who, in the union of faith, are willing to 'die with Jesus' there, have peace with God, a peace which may 'pass understanding,' but which Christian experience has abundantly verified as the most real and precious blessing upon earth.

This is what Paul most evidently believed. If he was mistaken in this belief, he alone was not mistaken. The whole New Testament shares in the mistake. From first

to last in the message of salvation as delivered by the Apostles, the death of Christ appears as the central, supreme, and all-essential fact. It does not stand alone: it is linked indissolubly with the suffering incarnate life before, and with the risen and glorified life after; but it is never lost sight of, never ignored, rather is ever in evidence, whether by direct statement or by obvious implication, as the indispensable condition of salvation. It would be a great error to regard this importance as peculiarly Pauline, something evolved from the Apostle's inner consciousness, and so far liable to be discounted. Take the death of Christ away, as a fact of supreme significance, from the writings of Peter and John, from Hebrews, and even from the Gospels, and the whole revelation verily tumbles to pieces.

It is not hard to see how the death of Christ gained its irresistible hold on Paul's mind. Whenever he became convinced of the Messiahship of Jesus, he could not possibly regard the Cross as a mere incidental episode. There rose at once the greatest of all problems before his mind—Why did the Messiah suffer and die? Familiar knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures rushed to his aid. The prophecies of the suffering 'Servant of Jehovah,' and above all the great passages of Isaiah liii., cast a light of almost dazzling brightness on the Cross; while all the ritual sacrifices of the Old Dispensation were seen to have their fulfilment in the "propitiation in the Messiah's blood." Coming afterwards into contact with the Apostles in Jerusalem, he would find that this was their view also. It had indeed been presented to them in the most solemn and significant way by the Master Himself. Above all, the institution of the Supper taught them that Jesus regarded the breaking of His body and the shedding of His blood as having a sacrificial value. They would have been blindest of the blind had they not perceived it there. And the Christian Church, amid all its controversies on the subject, has never to any important extent lost sight of this great truth. It can trace it directly to the lips of the Saviour Himself; and truly if Jesus did not

mean that His violent death was to be a sacrifice for the remission of sins, He was at most inexplicable pains, not only to conceal His true meaning, but even to inculcate another.

It is not, however, regarding the fact that human Redemption is closely associated with the death of Christ, that the great controversies have arisen. It is rather regarding the interpretation and explanation of the fact. Paul does not explain; he only asserts, and he relies on experience for his supreme verification. Figurative analogies that lie embedded in his expressions must not be pushed to extreme issues, otherwise we shall find that, like all analogies thus unwisely ridden, they may lead us to the crudest error. He uses language that best seems to him to convey the truth, but he is in a sphere where human language never can adequately express the full contents of the Divine mind or the Divine acts. It must be humbly acknowledged that no theory, from the most baldly forensic and matter-of-fact, to the most subtly speculative and transcendental, has ever completely satisfied men's minds in explaining the relation between the atoning sacrifice of Christ and the forgiveness of human sin. But it is one thing to find depths 'deeper than ever plummet sounded,' and quite another thing to assert that there is really no bottom to these depths. Human experience teaches a lowlier wisdom. Many things that are themselves a mystery still remain 'the master-light of all our seeing.' All reverent theories of the Redeemer's sacrifice are helpful, and doubtless contain various hints and gleams of the 'manifold wisdom of God,' that may do much to confirm us in an intelligent faith. At the same time the surest verification is not in a logical rationale but in Christian experience. Paul anchored his faith there, and countless thousands have followed him in his confession: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." There is many a great truth in God's universe of which it must be said —*Solvitur ambulando.* The only way of becoming convinced of the Atonement is in humble faith to rest the

burden of our guilt on the Saviour's sacrifice. The surest way to miss conviction is to wait till it is explained. We may well lay to heart the rebuke of one who at least does not approach the matter from any professional point of view, but who expresses amazement that we should treat this Christian doctrine as we do not treat the doctrines of Science, that is, rejecting it simply because of imperfect explanations.

"In cases," writes Mr. Arthur Balfour, "where the belief is rather the occasion of an hypothesis than a conclusion from it, the destruction of the hypothesis may be a reason for devising a new one, but is certainly no reason for abandoning the belief. Nor in science do we ever take any other view. We do not, for example, step over a precipice because we are dissatisfied with all the attempts to account for gravitation. In theology, however, experience does sometimes lean too timidly on theory, and when in the course of time theory decays, it drags down experience in its fall. How many persons are there, for example, who, because they dislike the theories of Atonement propounded, say, by Anselm, or Grotius, or the versions of these which have imbedded themselves in the devotional literature of Western Europe, feel bound 'in reason' to give up the doctrine itself? Because they cannot compress within the rigid limits of some semi-legal formula a mystery which, unless it were too vast for our full intellectual comprehension, would surely be too narrow for our spiritual needs, the mystery itself is to be rejected! Because they cannot contrive to their satisfaction a system of theological jurisprudence which shall include Redemption as a leading case, Redemption is no longer to be counted among the consolations of mankind!"[1]

But while the truth of Paul's declaration of the way of salvation is not dependent on its explanation, there are a few things regarding his present statement of it that we should be careful to bear in mind.

**1.** God the Father is Himself the source of Redemption. The Lord Jesus is not to be regarded as coming to persuade God to do what it was not in His heart to do already. Christ comes and gives Himself; but the Father

[1] *The Foundations of Belief*, 8th ed., pp. 356–357.

also gives Him, sends Him, and sets Him forth. Father and Son are one in perfect harmony from the very inception of the great Divine movement for human salvation. Further, there is no discord in the Divine nature needing to be harmonised. God is One, and what He does the whole Divine Personality does. There is no such thing as an antagonism between His attributes. His righteousness is conspicuously displayed in the Cross, but no less so are His grace and His love.

2. On the human side the Apostle insists on the necessity of Faith. This alone ought to warn us that the doctrine of Justification is not fully conceived by merely forensic or legal analogies. Moreover the 'faith' of which Paul here thinks is not a mere assent of the mind; it is rather an ardent self-committal to Christ, a giving of ourselves so completely to Him that a spiritual union results, in virtue of which all that He is and does becomes appropriated by us. "Faith, according to Paul, is at once an act of the reason or conviction, an act of the heart or trust, an act of the will or self-surrender —the last the most important of the three."[1]

3. Justification by faith does not represent a completed salvation. Paul has condemned the world for lack of righteousness. But the righteousness to which he now points is not in itself an actual righteousness in the believer, but rather a righteousness which for Christ's sake God regards him as possessing. It is therefore equivalent to forgiveness in the deep divine sense of the taking away of guilt. It enables a man to start "with a clean record"; yet it only enables him to start. If actual righteousness

[1] Reuss, *Christian Theology in the Apostolic Age*, ii. 90. Sanday and Headlam distinguish seven different senses in which Paul uses the word 'faith' in this Epistle: fidelity; the foundation for exercising spiritual gifts; trust in fulfilment of promises; a standing attitude towards God; acceptance of Christianity; a firm planting of the character on the service of Christ; and lastly, a crowning sense of greatest significance, *enthusiastic, personal adhesion*—the highest and most effective motive-power of which human character is capable. "It is well to remember that Paul has all these meanings before him; and he glances from one to another as the hand of a violin-player runs over the strings of his violin" (*Romans*, pp. 33–34).

were not to follow, salvation would be but a beginning without an end. Hence we speak of Justification as the reception of salvation, meaning thereby that it is the initial part of a process of which the goal is yet to be. That goal is complete Sanctification, the conformity to the image of Christ. Only when this is reached can we truly speak of salvation. The sanctifying of life, therefore, is the subject of Paul's next great division of his Epistle, not to be regarded as really separate from Justification, but as directly and inevitably springing out of it, and carrying it on to its proper fulfilment.

It is not to be marvelled at that the Apostle contemplates this 'revelation of righteousness' with exultant joy. All self-righteous boasting is excluded, for though indeed it be a right thing ever to have faith in God, there is yet no merit of righteousness in saving faith. The reconcilement whereby we enter into peace with God is of grace. And as God is the God of all His children, Jew and Gentile stand before Him in this respect on the same level. Does the familiar objection arise, 'This makes the Law of no effect'? Far from it, says Paul. The matter is not exhausted. We have but begun; we shall go farther and see that Law, in its deepest moral and spiritual demands, is thus, and only thus, firmly established.

This would naturally lead the Apostle, by direct transition, to the third part of his Exposition, namely, the completion of Salvation. Only, he is so eager to make clear that his doctrine of Justification by faith is not in contradiction to the older revelation, but is in essential harmony with it, that he pauses for a little to show how it lay embedded in the Old Testament. As in writing to the Galatians, so now (ch. iv.) he takes the case of Abraham as the crucial test, crucial, that is, from a Jewish standpoint. It is not necessary to linger again on his triumphant proof that Abraham, trusting in the Divine word and its fulfilment, had his faith reckoned to him as righteousness. Nor need we dwell on his striking and detailed analogy between Adam and Christ at the close of the fifth chapter. Paul believed that, in consequence

of what in modern phrase is called the solidarity of the race, death and all our woes, our tendency to sin and our liability to its punishment, were the direct fruits of man's first disobedience, the 'work' of one man. This familiar belief the Apostle uses as an illustration to magnify, both by likeness and by contrast, the work of Christ. If such great results could flow from the disobedience of one representative man, how much more may we believe that greater results of another and blessed kind, even the healing of the wounds of humanity and the renewing of its life, may flow from the obedience of a Second Adam, who, to use the expression of Irenæus, "has recapitulated the long development of humanity into Himself." [1] The passage very excellently serves to make graphic the element of universality in Christ's redeeming work. United to Adam by birth all die; united to Christ by faith all live. It is only necessary that as the union by birth is a reality, so the union by faith should be a reality also. Given that, there is no limit to the efficacy of the righteousness that is in Christ Jesus. In this way the illustration is a fitting close to the great section of the Epistle whose theme has been the possibility of a Justification too sadly recognised as universally needful.

### (C) *The Completion of Salvation.* (*Sanctification*, Chs. vi.–viii.)

In these chapters Paul is still continuing his exposition of the gospel as the power of God unto salvation, but he enters on the third and last part of it. He has to show how, if salvation begins with a righteousness reckoned to the believer, it goes on to its true fulfilment in a righteousness which becomes inherent in him. Through faith-union

[1] *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 18. 1, cit. Liddon, *Divinity of our Lord*, p. 8 n.

"It should be noted," says Beyschlag, "that Paul does not make Adam the subject of consideration for his own sake, or merely with the view of solving a theoretic problem, but that he regards him as a means of instruction—a means of making plain by this antitype the whole significance of Jesus for humanity and history" (*N. T. Theology*, ii. 63–64).

with Christ there is not only forgiveness, there is renewal of life. "In the cure of the soul," says Godet, "pardon is only the crisis of convalescence; the restoration of health is sanctification." [1]

The Apostle, however, occupies two chapters (vi.–vii.) before he begins to describe the actual manner in which the salvation of the Christian is carried to completion, namely, by the co-operating power of the Holy Spirit. First, he wishes to show that the grace of God of which he has spoken is not a doctrine which imperils holiness but rather securely establishes it—Sin and Grace (vi. 1–vii. 6); and secondly, to show that the moral law, without Divine aid, is hopeless for sanctification—Sin and the Law (vii. 7–end).

1. *Sin and Grace.* Grace abounding over sin was the triumphant note on which the passage on Justification closed. But the very phrase starts a difficulty, which, as we have seen (iii. 1–8), arises at once whenever sin and grace are brought into antithesis. Shall we sin that grace may abound? Is this what 'justification by faith' must result in? Is it essentially an immoral doctrine? Shall it see law given to the wind, or shall it rather lead to the perfect establishment of the law of holiness?

How does Paul answer this question? Exactly as he did in writing to the Galatians, by showing that persistence in sin would be an absolute contradiction of our union with Christ.

How shall such as we, he exclaims, who *died to sin*,[2]

[1] *Comm.* i. 392.

[2] Various views have been held of Paul's meaning by this expression (cf. Godet, *Comm.*, i. 402 sqq.). That the believer is 'dead to sin' in a complete moral sense, perfectly free from its power and seductions, is manifestly untenable. Paul did not believe that. His language must be interpreted by the justifying death of Christ on which the Christian rests, and in virtue of which, accepted as his own by faith, he is said to die. That is to say, its sense is relative to the condemnation of the Law. Paul passes to a moral meaning, however, when he speaks of not 'living' any longer in sin. And the moral element may also be recognised as to some extent present in the 'dying,' if we reflect that no man can truly accept Christ's great sacrifice for him without at the same time desiring to be free from that which brought such woe. Moreover, from the first moment of union with Christ, there is a reception of the Spirit of Christ, who immediately begins to work with us for holiness.

live any longer therein? Died to sin! Does the phrase surprise you? It ought not if you understand what the very initial stage of your Christian profession implies. Consider for a moment that when you accepted the Redeemer by faith, your faith was in His death. You were then baptized, and your baptism was the sign and seal of this relation to His death. It symbolised a union with Christ so close that what He did you did also. The death, therefore, of which I speak is the death you died with Him. And how fitting is the symbol of your immersion, for is it not a kind of burial? Had you not been joined to Christ in His dying you would never have been baptized.[1] Now Christ died unto sin—not that He ever sinned, but that 'for us' He came under its burden, and bore its malignity and its curse. Is it possible that a man could perceive this, humbly and joyfully accept the blessed results of the sacrifice, and yet persist in submitting himself to the thraldom that has caused such infinite sorrow? It is not possible; the man has never truly accepted Christ who can continue to live in the sin that slew Christ. Deep in its heart the acceptance of the Saviour carries the abhorrence of sin. The realisation of perfect holiness may be at the end of a long process, but in principle the complete severance with sin takes place on the acceptance of Christ by faith. The will undergoes a complete change regarding it. Its dominion at the seat of life is broken. Yea, take the figure of baptism one step farther, and you will realise the truth even more clearly. The waters pass over your head, but it is only for a moment. You emerge again; and therein is symbolised your participation also in Christ's rising from the dead. Your union with Him is not partial but complete. It implies not merely dying to sin, but living unto righteousness, 'walking in newness of life.' As He died to live for ever with God, so must we regard ourselves as entering with Him on a risen life of Divine

[1] Naturally Paul is speaking of adult baptism, for he is addressing those who, having received Christ in ripe years, had observed the rite in this form. It would, however, be pressing his illustration too far to argue from this that he would have *excluded* the children of believing parents from the ordinance.

communion. The appeal of Christian faith to holiness is therefore direct, obvious, and inevitable. The reign of sin in our mortal bodies is over; we are under dominion to another Lord, to present our bodies to Him henceforth as the instruments of righteousness alone.

Here we have the great doctrine of the Christian's mystical union with Christ. It is evident how in a moment it lifts the doctrine of Justification by faith out of any mere logical peril of antinomianism. It saves it by exhibiting it not as an independent and isolated experience, but as in intimate and inseparable relation with the eternal life of Christ. Here the Pauline conception of faith merges into that of love. For a perfect love has this very unifying and transforming power. The Divine Spirit no doubt guided the Apostle in the enunciation of so bold a doctrine, which has its parallel to a certain extent in other writings of Scripture. But above all, Paul is transcribing from his own experience. This is what faith in Christ had meant to him,—union complete, personal, irrevocable, the vision of a perfect and all-absorbing love. We know the power that love has of identifying itself with its object, so that the very life of the one, with all its thoughts and desires, actually becomes the life of the other. In declaring such a relation to the Saviour, Paul points the Christian to the possible happy solution of all his moral problems and conflicts. "The struggling stream of duty, which had not volume enough to bear him to his goal, is suddenly reinforced by the immense tidal wave of sympathy and emotion."[1] What he cannot do of himself he will be able to do by the power of faith working through love. Self-sacrifice and self-conquest will become easy to him by this constraint. So constant and inspiring will Christ's spiritual presence with him be, that in his resistance and triumphs it will seem as if it were no longer he that lived but Christ that lived in him.

In further enforcing the fact that the Christian has passed over completely from the old life of sin to the new

[1] M. Arnold, *St. Paul and Protestantism*, p. 47.

life of righteousness, Paul uses two illustrations, the first from slavery (vi. 15–23), and the second from marriage (vii. 1–6). At conversion a great change was made, but it was after all only a change of masters. It would be a profound mistake to think that freedom from the bonds of sin means absolute freedom to do henceforth as we please. It means freedom to enter on the service of the Divine Lord,—henceforth to become His slaves, whose duties are duties of righteousness, and whose rich reward is eternal life. Or, in the old life we were as one wedded to a bad husband. But that old tyrannical lord died, and the claim of the law which bound us to him passed away, so that we are free to enter into union with another, even Christ, the fruit of union with whom will not be sinful passions, such as wrought through the Law, but holiness unto God.

At this point Paul might have passed on to speak of the indwelling Divine power by which the fruits of holiness are attained. But he has just used some strong expressions which he desires to guard against misunderstanding. He has spoken of the Law as an oppressive dominion, and of sinful passions working through it. He knows this will raise a difficulty in many minds, because many, especially of his countrymen, regarded the Law as the truest safeguard of morals, and would at once repudiate any theory which seemed to disparage it.

2. He has therefore to deal with this question, the relation between the *Law and Sin*—to show not that the Law is sinful, but that it is powerless to produce holiness. It is important to keep his particular aim carefully in view. If we lose sight of it, we shall altogether mistake the passage that follows. His intention is not to expound any abstract or exhaustive theory, but in a rapid and graphic way to make clear that the Moral Law of God in its widest sense, though with the Mosaic Law in the foreground as its most concrete expression, is unable of itself, and never by itself was intended, either to justify or to sanctify a human soul.

This subject occupies from the seventh verse to the

end of the chapter. It is very obviously divided into two parts at the close of the thirteenth verse. In both parts Paul speaks in the first person, but in the first part he speaks in the past tense. About the first section there can be no difficulty. It is quite parallel with his teaching in Galatians as to the relation between Sin and the Law. To make the matter clear, he says, let me put it as my own experience, not because that was exceptional, but because I believe it was perfectly typical and common. There was a time in my life when I might be said to be living without the Law; that is, I was scarcely conscious of it; it never troubled me; I lived as I desired, careless and happy, in my youthful ignorance, neither concerned nor alarmed by the awful authority of the Law. But that period did not last. The Law came home to me in its majesty and holiness. With what result? It overwhelmed me with the sense of sin. Nay more than that—perfect proof of the ingrained evil of my life—its very commands, opposing themselves to my inclinations, roused these inclinations into new activity and strength. Take that great word: "Thou shalt not covet." Is it not obvious that the very moment I became conscious of that as the Divine Will, penetrating to the root of all evil thought and desire, a new evil would arise within me? By the very perversity of my nature, that which pointed me inexorably to holiness only made more clamorous and turbulent the evil passions that should be quelled. Holy as the Law was, sin took occasion by it, deceived me, and by it slew me. Was the end wholly evil? God forbid. Rather this good was accomplished—Sin was revealed in its intense enmity, "exceeding sinful."

So far there is little difficulty of interpretation. But when we come to the passage beginning at the fourteenth verse there are many sayings that startle us, and that have given rise to the greatest divergence of opinion. Paul still speaks in the first person, but now he speaks in the present tense. And how does he represent himself—if it really be himself he is describing—an apostle "in Christ" for so many devoted years? As "carnal and sold under sin"!

As having the will to do what he finds himself impotent to accomplish, nay, verily doing what he hates! Delighting in the Law of God in his inmost being, he is yet conscious of "another law" also in him, that is in his flesh, in his members, where Sin seems to dwell as a personal and antagonistic power, warring against the good and bringing him into woeful captivity. Unhappy and wretched, how shall he be delivered? There is but one way—thank God for it—"through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Now, how is this dark and appalling analysis to be understood? Does Paul really mean to describe his own state, and his own present state? Some say: This is impossible; it would be to describe the dismal failure of Christianity itself. We do not deny a Christian conflict, but this conflict here represented is one of inevitable defeat, in which there is not a single ray of victory. Hope is shut out, all distinctive Christian references are excluded, until in misery we are brought as the climax of the experience to cry at last for the Saviour Christ. We must not be misled by the present tense: that is only due to the keenness of the realisation of an indelible memory. Paul is manifestly describing a state where union with Christ is not yet accomplished, and where there has been no actual entrance into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Many learned and evangelical writers hold, therefore, that the reference is to man in his unregenerate and pre-Christian days. And it would undoubtedly be a relief in many respects if we felt compelled to acknowledge that such language could not possibly refer to the experience of a Christian man. Nevertheless, we feel constrained to believe that Paul means us so to understand it. If we simply ask ourselves how we should naturally interpret such a passage, if we had no haunting dogmas in the background of our minds to consider, the answer ought to be obvious. In such a case two things would surely be quite clear—first, Paul is speaking of himself, and secondly, he is speaking of his present experience. If he is not, then his language seems not only incomprehensible, but culpably so.

We cannot escape from the present tense by simply saying that Paul now desired to be specially graphic and impressive, to give "life and strength to his paragraph," and therefore used an oratorical device "specially common among writers of Greek." He was quite graphic and impressive in the previous verses where he spoke in the past tense; and if he had meant us to think that he continued to refer to a completed experience he would still have used that tense.

Moreover, we ought not to overlook the fact that the light of Christian experience does shine conspicuously amid all the gloom of this subtle passage. Whence that will to do good? that veritable delight in the law of God after the inward man? that hatred of evil, groaning under its burden, and longing for deliverance? Here is not speaking a man who is at enmity with God and the Divine Law, but one who in his inmost being is in essential harmony with them. In his unjustified state it was totally different. Then he united in desire with the 'flesh' against the Law, now he unites with the Law against the flesh. The character of the conflict has profoundly changed. Formerly it was external, when the whole man, will and appetite allied, joined against the commandment; now it is internal, when the man is divided against himself, will and Law, the new allies, arrayed against Sin reigning in the flesh. How is such a complete reversal to be accounted for? Can such be the description of a soul unregenerate and without Christ? If so, it is not the kind of description that Paul and the Bible elsewhere give.

But what of that acknowledged impotence? and what of that vaunted union with Christ, which from its very inception meant victory and freedom from sin and death? Is the Christian life nothing but a paradox and a self-contradiction? This is of course the crux of the matter. Why does Paul, if he is describing Christian experience, hold specific Christian grace in the background, and represent the conflict as if the aids of grace did not exist? We think because he is remaining true to the point from which he started, and which we are apt to forget, namely,

that he wishes to demonstrate the powerlessness of the Law and the human will, even the renewed will, to work out a sanctified life apart from the Divine supernatural aid. Christ essential to start with, and Christ essential right through—that is his point. And how could he better show that Christ is essential than by showing how fatal it is to dispense with Him even for a moment? But it may be said, the aid of grace is at once given, and is inalienable from a converted man. And yet in Christian life the separation is practically very common. Holiness is not produced by compulsion; it is realised by a Christian's free self-determination with the Spirit. Moreover, union and distinction are by no means incompatible ideas.[1] The Spirit is given, but He is given as a Personality, not as an immediately penetrating and pervading essence. Even as Christians we are yet in our inmost being so much ourselves that at times we ignore the Spirit's presence, and move independently of Him in our own unaided strength. The treasure is in earthen vessels, and it is possible, as Augustine said, for the grace to be at once present and profitless.[2] In short, is it not in harmony with Christian experience to say that spiritual as we become on union with Christ, evil is yet 'present' with us, we are still 'flesh,' and almost every day and hour of our lives we have reason to know that this flesh, as the chief seat

[1] Cf., *e.g.*, the doctrine of the Trinity; and in ch. viii., the union and distinction between Christ and the Spirit, and between the indwelling Divine Spirit and the human spirit, *e.g.*, in vv. 16 and 26. Beyschlag seems rather to force the meaning of such passages in contending that the Holy Spirit is not to be conceived as a Divine Person at all, but only as a penetrating gift, sometimes poetically or rhetorically personified (*N.T. Theol.*, ii. 207–208). Cf. also Reuss, *Theol. of Apost. Age*, ii. 115.

Pfleiderer thus expresses his interpretation of the union: "that the Divine Spirit and the natural human spirit coalesce in the Christian into the unity of a new subject, a new or spiritual man (they unite therefore in substance, comp. 1 Cor. vi. 17), but yet in such a way that this union is not absolutely complete from the beginning, but always progressing merely, and therefore always in part not existing; consequently both substances are always in another sense distinct, and related to each other as that which is active and giving, to that which is passive and receiving" (*Paulinism*, i. 215).

[2] Cf. *Lux Mundi*, p. 333.

of indwelling Sin, is a reality and power to be dreaded and lamented? Nay, the better the inward will becomes, and the more we delight in God's Law and sincerely desire it, the greater distress do we feel over the fleshly environment in which Sin still resides, those "outer works of the fortress" where the footing of the foe is still firm,—a distress, moreover, which is begotten not so much by the actual magnitude of the victories Sin obtains, as by the terrible significance of its reality and its persistence. Hence Paul's agonising conflict even as a Christian, his call to "mortify the deeds of the body," his "fighting not as one that beateth the air"; and hence the sad cries *de profundis* in which the most noble and saintly souls of Christian history have echoed his experience. This was the prayer of Bishop Heber, not before his 'conversion,' but shortly before his death: "O my Father, my Master, my Saviour and my King, unworthy and wicked as I am, reject me not as a polluted vessel, but so quicken me by Thy Spirit from the death of Sin that I may walk in newness of life before Thee. Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief! Lord, I repent, help Thou my impenitence! Turn Thou me, O Lord, and so I shall be turned. Be favourable unto me and I shall live."[1]

The way is now clear for Paul to enter on the subject to which he has been leading up since the opening of the sixth chapter—*life perfected by the Spirit*. The various objections and difficulties that intervened have been swept away. He is free to declare the power by which the justified soul is brought on towards a complete salvation. There is reason for that Godward glance and cry of gratitude at the close of the last chapter. For awful as the strength of indwelling Sin may be, there is another Indweller, closer and mightier, even the Holy Spirit.

In a sense it is no new doctrine that Paul has to

[1] The difficulties of interpretation in this passage are ably discussed by Hodge in his *Commentary on Romans*, pp. 237–243. Cf. also the exposition given by Principal Dykes in ch. xix. of his *Gospel according to St. Paul*—a chapter admirable for its spiritual insight, and for the felicity and beauty of its expression.

deliver in declaring the influence of the Divine Spirit on man. It is a doctrine that runs through the whole of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. But there is a very marked development. In the Old Testament the Spirit is represented chiefly as a power going forth from the Almighty to create and sustain the world, an omnipresent 'force' that underlies all things, without which there is no life or strength. He inspires the human faculties with wisdom and skill, and upholds them in their noblest undertakings and achievements. He guides the designing mind and deft hand of the artificer, the ruling and conquering hand of the king, gives sweet utterance to the singer of sacred songs, and lays upon the prophet the burden of the spiritual vision and the divine word of righteousness and judgment. Only very occasionally, and rather as a gleam of anticipation than as a common and accepted faith, do we find Him represented as specially and peculiarly active in aiding, comforting, and controlling the spiritual life of God's children. But this conception distinctly appears when we come to the New Testament; not immediately, indeed, even in the Gospels, but certainly very clearly and explicitly in the last words of Christ to His disciples. In that tender and significant discourse on the eve of betrayal, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the substitute of Christ, the other Advocate, is distinctly portrayed. He is there represented not as an influence or power merely, but as a Person who consciously purposes and acts: witnessing, teaching, guiding, speaking, taking, hearing, declaring, pleading, convincing. And after Pentecost the Apostles and all the disciples live in the conscious joy of the fulfilment of that great promise. The book of Acts is full of the Spirit's presence and activity in every movement of the Church in council and missionary service, and no less in the conversion and leading of the individual, and very specially in the bestowal upon him of spiritual gifts. Paul as a Christian entered into such a faith and experience. But—and this is his great distinction—it was given to him in a special manner, not indeed to declare a thing altogether unknown, but to bring out into clear relief, and

to develop in all its transcendent importance, the relation of the Spirit to the inward life, His ever-present co-operation with the renewed man for holiness and ultimate glory. All other activities of the Spirit seem henceforth to be eclipsed by this—the part He plays in Salvation, leading men to Christ, and bringing them at last into perfect conformity with Christ both in character and in destiny.

This is the grand theme of the eighth chapter of Romans. In treating it, the Apostle, while not quite free from language which suggests the idea of the Spirit as an emanating power, distinctly and pre-eminently presents to us the idea of a Person, 'indwelling' in a mystical and humanly inexplicable way, yet acting as only a Person can, and so intimately associated with God and Christ in Divine acts and relations (His very name being synonymous with theirs), as to lead us to regard Him as really partaking of the essence of the Divine Being. Nor is the agency of the Holy Spirit to be regarded as solely connected with the process we entitle Sanctification, although it is brought so prominently forward in this connection. Already Paul has said (v. 5) that it is through Him the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, and elsewhere we are told that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Spirit. He is therefore beneficently and effectually present from the first stage of the new life to the last. It may be said of Him, as is said of Christ, without Him we can do nothing. Christians should realise His presence not as a merely possible and superadded grace, but as all-essential and vital. It is not only that they may have the Spirit, but that they must have Him. "Now if any man," says the Apostle, "have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." We start by receiving Him, and we only make progress and are blest by 'walking' with Him. It is on this that Paul now almost rapturously fixes his attention and that of his readers. As we maintain this walk and realise it, so are we led into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

The account which the Apostle gives of the perfecting work of the Holy Spirit may be represented in various

ways. It has been regarded as a two-sided process, negative and positive, corresponding to the dying and rising again of Christ; for Paul never for a moment loses sight of his fundamental principle that in a deep true sense the Christian experience is to be a repetition of the experience of Christ. The negative side is therefore represented as a crucifying or mortifying of the flesh in so far as it is the seat of sin, and also as a "suffering together with Christ," that is, as an enduring of the evils of life for Christ's sake and in Christ's manner. To this is related the positive side, as the resurrection is related to the dying, a life in newness of the Spirit, led and ruled by the law of the Spirit. The resultant is Christian virtue, displayed in its numerous manifestations, and that not merely as the necessary fruit of accepted salvation, but also as the indispensable means and condition of the perfect and final salvation.[1]

It is necessary, however, to keep somewhat more closely to the line of thought at present before us. The chapter is difficult to divide, because the transitions are so subtle, and the whole forms so perfect a unity. There seem three distinctions which we may make, and which we may entitle *characteristics of life in the Spirit*:—(1) the believer's victory over sin and death (vv. 1–13); (2) his perfect sonship (vv. 14–17); and (3) his participation in the sufferings of Christ as a preparation for a divinely destined glory. Then, as the wings of thought bear us very near the Throne, there is a closing passage which takes the form of a rhythmic and impassioned challenge: "Quis ergo nos separabit a charitate Christi?"

1. For a moment Paul glances back on what has been already established, that God sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh has condemned sin in the flesh, not only showing it alien to humanity, but atoning for it, and casting it out. Itself condemned, it can no longer condemn them that are in Christ Jesus. But more than that, God

[1] So the subject is suggestively handled by Pfleiderer in his chapter on the Development of the New Life, *Paulinism*, i. 215–228.

designs in them the fulfilment of all the righteous demands of the Law. This is to be accomplished by "walking after the Spirit," submitting to His rule and guidance, just as before redemption the feature of life was a submission to the impulses and control of the "flesh." This leads the Apostle to contrast the two lives, the new and the old, in their aims and results. The life after the flesh seeks the earthly, the sensual, the perishing; the life after the Spirit seeks the heavenly, the spiritual, the eternal. The results are widely apart; death for the one, and life for the other. And these results are not arbitrary, but as it were necessary and inevitable. That which is "enmity to God" can never hope to live in any good or worthy sense; and that which "pleases Him" may be assured, not merely that it cannot die, but that it will live indeed, and be filled with the holy calm that is possible only to a soul in harmony with heaven. Yea, says the Apostle, the life given by the Spirit, will extend even to our mortal bodies, because to be possessed by the great Life-Giver is a pledge of immortality even for them.

2. The essence of the new life consists in our sonship. If we perceive that the Spirit has led us into this perfect relationship to God, then we must also perceive that all that makes life blessed flows from it. The oppressive sense of bondage and fear passes away; we are sons and daughters again in our Father's house, and the Spirit by all His good fruits in us, such as love, joy, peace, testifies that it is so. The Apostle here, as in Galatians, uses his characteristic expression of "adoption." It has both a figurative and a real significance. In so far as it is metaphorically legal, it expresses our acceptance in Justification, when we are regarded as God's sons, and thus brought into a state of confidence. But there is more intended than a mere legal transference from one condition to another; we do effectually and essentially become sons by the Spirit, so that henceforth we live with all those filial impulses that lead us to fulfil the Father's Will. Nay more, the son is of necessity also an heir. We are assured therefore of a glorious destiny, even to share in the

heavenly inheritance with Christ. In this way everything, from the beginning to the end of Salvation, is implied in our possession of the Spirit who gives "adoption."

3. Nor are we for a moment to think that this glorious destiny is belied by the fact that at the present time suffering and tribulation abound. Let us remember our complete "solidarity" with Christ by the Spirit. It is only a deep testimony to our union with our Lord if so be that we suffer with Him. "Is it fit," says Archbishop Leighton, "that we should not follow where our Captain led, and went first, but that He should lead through rugged, thorny ways, and we pass about to get away through flowery meadows? If we be parts of Him, can we think that a body finding nothing but ease, and bathing in delights, accords with a Head so tormented? I remember what that pious Duke said at Jerusalem, when they offered to crown him king there, *Nolo auream, ubi Christus spineam:* No crown of gold, where Christ was crowned with thorns."[1]

Let suffering, then, be accepted as a sign of our profound 'sympathy' with Christ, and as in His case so also in ours it will be but a preparation for the glory yet to be, so incomparably precious that the present cross fades into nothingness before its anticipation. All suffering, if we view it aright, contains in its heart a hope and prophecy of coming into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. It is not a final issue but a transition. In this sense let us regard it, and interpret its universal voices. These are the moans of prisoners, but "prisoners of hope." The whole lower creation of animate and inanimate things joins with man in his cry and expectation. It too suffers with its head, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.

It is no new thought to regard the natural world as in sympathy with man, clouding its face at his sorrow, and clapping its hands at his joy. The Old Testament is full of such conceptions, and they are common to the poetry of

[1] *Comm. on 1 Peter*, ed. 1870, ii. 672; citing Godfrey of Bouillon.

all ages. "Nature," says Schelling, "with its melancholy charm, resembles a bride who, at the very moment when she was fully attired for marriage, saw her bridegroom die. She still stands with her fresh crown and in her bridal dress, but her eyes are full of tears."[1] But Paul goes farther than a mere poetic conception of sympathy. Human sin is to him "an all-penetrating sacrament of woe." He interprets the tears and disappointment of the world as in causal relation with the fallen state of man. The creation, for man's sake, is unwillingly subjected to "vanity"—not to death or corruption merely, but to something even more dreary and appalling, "to purposelessness, to an inability to realise its natural tendencies and the ends for which it was called into being, to baffled endeavour and mocked expectation, to a blossoming and not bearing fruit, a pursuing and not attaining."[2]

Such a representation has occasioned no small amount of perplexity. No doubt the passage has conceptions that are quite in harmony with cherished ideas of modern science. Science has no quarrel with the teaching that finality is not yet reached in the evolutionary process, that there is a unity in the created world, and that man is the crown and head of that world. But in making the sufferings of the lower creation dependent on human sin, it is not quite so easy to see how the Apostle's language is to be harmonised with our scientific knowledge of the world's history before man appeared. Decay and rapine, destruction and death, were there already. Some have found relief in believing that there was a divinely designed anticipation in the suffering of the creatures before man's advent; that is to say, that the Creator, foreseeing the issue of human freedom, anticipated its evil consequences in the constitution of things from the first. Apart from this, however, the causal relation may be at least partially justified when we observe how human sin, in its cruel tyranny and havoc, works with malignant force over the whole face of nature.

[1] Cit. Godet, *Comm.*, ii. 95.
[2] Ellicott, *The Destiny of the Creature*, p. 7.

It not only acts as a hindrance to a cosmic development which was in process from the beginning of the world, but it produces a fearful intensification of the suffering which already had its place in that development. Although we may thus in some degree satisfy ourselves that Paul's bold glance into the mystery of the "vanity" is not baseless, it must be confessed that from the nature of the case 'proof' is not possible on either side, and no theory can be devised that will absolutely convince the mind on so obscure a subject.[1]

What we should mark very clearly is the goal to which the whole passage tends. Paul's gaze is one of glad rapture towards that "far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves," even the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. To his listening ear, in all the plaintiveness of the cry that is heard not only in nature but in man, and even in the mysterious sympathy of the Spirit who cries with us in making us cry, there is distinguishable the accent of assurance that the murmur will reach the Divine heart, and move the Divine hand. He who searcheth the hearts knoweth the meaning even of these inarticulate longings and desires, the truest of all prayers, the mind of the indwelling Spirit, who maketh intercession for the saints. Let us hold fast therefore our hope. Nothing will more triumphantly distinguish life in the Spirit than this conviction, that "all things work together for good to them that love God." Carry your thoughts on to find their holiest assurance in Him. There are golden chains that bind us to the throne of God. They descend and ascend, stretching from heaven to earth, and back again from earth to heaven. Not one of their links can be broken. They are divinely wrought, and they are secured in the infallibility of the Divine Will. Two links are eternal and in heaven, that God foreknows and predestinates those that are to be conformed

[1] Cf. Dorner, *Christian Doctrine*, ii. 65–67; Bushnell, *Nature and the Supernatural*, ch. vii.; Ellicott, *Destiny of the Creature;* Orr, *Christian View*, p. 227; Forrest, *Christ of History and of Experience*, p. 422; Cox, *The House and its Builder* pp. 49 sqq.

to the image of His Son; two are for time and on the earth, that He calls them and justifies them; and one stretches back again to heaven and the eternal future, that them He also glorifies. At this point believing assurance can no farther go. If glory be reached, surely 'salvation' is then complete; and that it will be reached we know, because salvation is anchored in the perfect love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So sublime a passage has only one possible conclusion —an impassioned hymn of triumph. Challenge follows challenge in rapid succession, waiting for no answer where no answer is possible. In a flash of seraphic joy the Apostle declares that nothing, no conceivable power in heaven or earth, is able to break that golden chain, or to intervene between those who are "in Christ Jesus" and the omnipotent love that holds them there.

### 2. Historical Relation of the Gospel to Mankind, especially to the Jews. (Chs. ix.–xi.)

The Apostle has now completed the exposition of the gospel as the power of God unto salvation. He has shown the universal need of such a salvation, how all men may receive it by faith in Christ Jesus, and how it is carried on to a glorious issue by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. He now devotes three chapters to the consideration of the historical relation of the gospel to the nations, and especially to the Jews.

It is perfectly obvious how he was led to deal with such an aspect of his subject. It was not before his mind as a matter of mere speculative interest, but as one of constantly pressing and practical moment. He never could at any time dilate on the glory and blessedness of Christ's kingdom, without having the thought immediately presented to his mind—the Gentiles have come in, but the Jews are excluded! This was not only a profound grief to him as a patriotic Jew, but it raised a startling problem, whose difficulty he found quick-witted and unbelieving Jews ever ready to urge. The Jews were confessedly the chosen

people of God. To them and their fathers the promises were made. How does it happen, then, that when the Messianic kingdom appears, it is just they who are specially distinguished by remaining outside it? Is it not clear—either Jesus is not the Messiah, or, if He is, the Divine promises to Israel have been a delusion? We can have little doubt that such a dilemma had immediately forced itself on Paul's mind when he became a Christian, and there can be just as little doubt that it would be raised by others wherever he afterwards advocated his faith. What he now proceeds to do is to show how he himself resolved the difficulty; how he verily believed both things, that Jesus was the promised Messiah, and that even in the present Jewish rejection the word of God still stood.

The chapters are thus of the nature of a Theodicy, a justification of Divine dealings with men. They have raised many hard and really insoluble questions, and are among the most controverted passages of the whole Bible. If we are to have any hope of fairly comprehending them, two things must be premised.

1. In the first place, we must keep steadily in mind that the whole passage is a unity. Judgment should not be passed on it till the whole is heard. None of the chapters is in itself a complete presentation of the Apostle's thoughts, but all three together are. Nothing could be more dangerous or more surely fruitful of error than to treat, say, the ninth chapter as if it stood isolated and alone, complete without the others. Paul will reach a conclusion, but he will reach it at the end and not in the middle of his argument.

2. In the second place, we must remember the occasional character of the passage. The Apostle is not engaged in any purely abstract discussion. He does not for a moment dream of laying down final and infallible dicta regarding the "unsearchable wisdom of God." He has some modesty, if certain of his interpreters have had little. There is one particular aim before him, namely, to make clear how the prevailing rejection of the Jews is compatible with the truth of his gospel. The form which his treat-

ment of this subject takes is determined by the nature of the objections that were actually presented to him. He is not wrestling with the elaborate distinctions of modern metaphysics, but directly opposing such objections as a Jew, and especially a Pharisaic Jew of his own time, would naturally urge.

Such an opponent was evidently accustomed to state the position in a very high-minded manner, distinguished, as it seemed to the Apostle, almost equally by impious pride and delusive error. 'The Messianic Kingdom! When it came, nothing was surer than this, that he and his whole race would stand at its centre. God had pledged Himself. Not only would He bestow His blessing on the Jews, but He must do so. He had committed Himself in His promises. The seed of Abraham simply cannot miss the kingdom of heaven. The Christ of God will be "the glory of His people Israel." Any so-called gospel that ignores this has falsehood written on its front. Rejection after election is a notion to be met only by ineffable scorn.'

Paul addresses himself to the matter put in such a way. If this be the true conception of things, then God's hands are tied, and He cannot help blessing the Jew whether the Jew deserves it or not.[1] The Apostle repudiates such a presumption with intense earnestness. He flashes upon it with arguments which his opponent could not gainsay. He shows him that it leads to ideas of God which all his scriptures contradict, and all past history falsifies. God is above all things free; His promises are conditioned by human action, and His justice is to be vindicated, not in the broken moments of time, but in the great eternal purpose.

[1] That this is no perversion of the idea the Rabbis had of their 'election,' see the striking quotations from Weber given by Sanday and Headlam, p. 249. One part, too, of the Messianic promise many Jews had almost forgotten—"a light to lighten the Gentiles." "The Jew believed that his race was joined to God by a covenant which nothing could dissolve, and that he and his people alone were the centre of all God's action in the creation and government of the world." *Ibid.*

The argument is thus threefold. Paul views the matter first from the Divine side, secondly from the human side, and finally in the light of the final issue. Or we might put it otherwise: he speaks first of the Divine liberty and fidelity in the present rejection of Israel; of the Divine justice of it; and lastly of the Divine purpose in it, for after all it is only partial and for a time.

**1. The question from the Divine side—God's liberty and consistency (ch. ix. 1–29).** Paul begins in the most earnest and touching manner by declaring his profound longing for the salvation of his kinsmen, and his hearty recognition of all the special privileges God has bestowed upon them.[1] He then passes on without any direct statement to the consideration of the problem of their present rejection. He has before his mind such an opponent as he had often listened to, and he debates with him. Israel must be of the kingdom, you say, otherwise God's word comes to naught. But consider a moment concerning God's word and His manner of fulfilling it. Who are meant by the Israel of the Divine promise? You think all are included who spring from Abraham by hereditary descent. I do not think so, and the very facts of the case are against you. Look back on the history, and you find a process of selection going on within the family of Abraham from the very beginning. Isaac was chosen, but Ishmael was rejected; Jacob was chosen, and Esau was rejected; and not only so, but in the latter case the choice was made before either was born, and when it

[1] The close of verse 5 is exceedingly important. It depends on punctuation whether the phrase "God blessed for ever" is to be referred to Christ or not. Few scholars would have the slightest doubt that such was the reference if they did not come to the verse with doctrinal prepossessions. Grammar and the general sense of the passage obviously demand it. Cf. Gifford, *Romans*, pp. 178–179, who says: "When we review the history of the interpretation, it cannot but be regarded as a remarkable fact that every objection urged against the ancient interpretation rests ultimately on dogmatic presuppositions, and that every alternative that has been proposed is more or less objectionable both in the form of expression and in the connection of thought." Cf. Sanday and Headlam, pp. 233 sqq.; Godet, ii. 139 sqq.

was impossible therefore for personal *merit* to be the ground of it. It was clearly the free election of God according to the infinite wisdom of His purpose. As actual fact, then, God whom you would 'necessitate' has plainly exercised His liberty. But, you say, if He has made choice independently of human will and endeavour, it can scarcely be regarded as a righteous choice. I reply, for the present, that He has done it *according to His word*, as He said to Moses in the case of mercy, and as He said to Pharaoh in the case of severity. For you and me that is sufficient, for neither of us dreams for a moment that God could either say or do wrong. You turn, however, to another point and say, 'If God acts so, human responsibility disappears. If, in being rejected, I am but a helpless instrument of His will, no blame can attach to me; I am simply in the hands of an irresistible fate.' Paul replies to this by declaring the impiety of the creature in challenging in any way the action of the Creator. He uses the familiar illustration of the potter and the clay; and quotes from the prophets to show that God had foretold His intention to exercise the liberty of His grace in calling the Gentiles and rejecting all but a remnant of the Jews. Amid all his liberty, of course, the potter works, it is presumed, not with arbitrary caprice, but with wisdom and with a recognition of fitness. The Apostle, however, does not hint at any such mitigation. There is nothing in his language but the simple assertion of the Divine sovereignty. One perhaps feels that the difficulty has been met rather with a knock-down blow than with an argument, and that if Paul's writing had stopped here we should have listened to him in surprise as teaching an uncompromising fatalism. Nay more, we should have been quite unable to reconcile him with a hundred other evangelical and pleading utterances of his own. In truth, if this image were to be taken as, what it manifestly is not, the last word of the Christian faith, "it would be a bitter mockery of all the deep yearnings and legitimate desires of a soul aspiring after God. It would be at once the satire of reason against itself, and the suicide of revela-

tion."[1] We may therefore be certain we are hearing but part. Paul devotes himself for the moment to one point, namely, to establish the complete liberty of the Divine action. If we run off with this truth and wrest it to our own destruction, the fault is ours rather than his. We shall not misconceive Paul if we think of him as saying: I wish you to realise that God is not fettered in the way you so delusively dream, and that He has not broken but rather fulfilled His own word. On what conditions it pleases Him in His infinite wisdom to exercise His liberty, is a further question on which He has by no means left us in the dark. "Audi alteram partem."

2. The human side—God justified in the rejection (ch. ix. 30–x. 21). Has God, in point of fact, proceeded without the consideration of righteousness? Far from it. Righteousness has been the very basis of the choice of the Gentiles and of the rejection of the Jews. The Gentiles indeed were not distinguished for seeking the righteousness of obedience, nevertheless they have attained the righteousness which is by faith, and which has been already explained. It is just here the Jews have failed. They have clung to the impossible. They have endeavoured to establish their own righteousness by works, and it has been futile. Zealous as they have been, they have stumbled at the Divine way, which is "Christ, the end of the Law unto righteousness to every one that believeth." This way was as open to them as to any. There has been no distinction in the offer of the saving grace. It has been universal and free. The message even already has practically been delivered all over the earth, wherever the Jewish race are scattered. They have heard and understood, but they would not accept the glad tidings. Is it a strange thing? Nay, it was foreseen of old, and the very heart of the whole matter lies in these bold words of Isaiah: "To Israel He saith, All the day long did I spread out My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people."

[1] Reuss, *Christian Theology*, ii. 102–103.

Israel is rejected! Let Israel look into its history and heart, and learn the reason why.

3. The final issue—the Divine purpose in the calling of the Gentiles and the rejection of Israel (ch. xi.). Do I speak, continues Paul, as if Israel were wholly cut off? Not so. Heavy as my heart is over the indisputable fact that the great mass of my countrymen will not listen to the gospel, yet do I thank God that even now there is a remnant according to the election of grace. I myself, of the seed of Abraham, am a witness, and there are others besides, for it is as in the days of Elijah, when, amid the prevailing defection, God still preserved for Himself the thousands who had not bowed the knee to Baal. There are too many, alas, who are fulfilling the dire prophecy of judicial blindness and stupor, yet even of them let me declare my deep and happy faith. It will not be ever thus. Their stumbling is not a final fall; they will rise again. One day the Gentile joy will stir their emulation, and they will come in. Even now I can see in their stumbling a Divine purpose of grace, for it has been the occasion of the incoming and riches of the Gentiles. Ah, let me speak to you Gentiles! Let me rouse in your hearts some spark of my own love and longing for my kinsmen. Do not despise the Jews. They are like broken branches now, but God is able to graft them in again to the holy stem from which they have fallen. Do not be puffed up with pride over them. You are enjoying blessing from which they are excluded, but one day they shall enter into the kingdom, and what an hour of seven-fold revival and refreshing that will be! Remember how it is written that ungodliness shall be turned away from Jacob. If you might say that all Israel is now against us, God's time is coming when it shall be the reverse, and all Israel shall be saved.[1] Is it not true that the bondage

[1] "The words of St. Paul mean simply this: the people of Israel as a nation, and no longer ἀπὸ μέρους, shall be united with the Christian Church. They do not mean that every Israelite shall finally be saved. Of final salvation St. Paul is not now thinking, nor of God's dealings with individuals, nor does he ask about those who are already dead, or who will die before

and sorrows of disobedience drove you in gladness to the Cross? And will not the same Divine process have its perfect fruit in them?

"My own hope is, a sun will pierce
The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;
That, after Last, returns the First,
Though a wide compass round be fetched;
That what began best, can't end worst,
Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst."

No wonder the Apostle, whose heart has again worked its way so nobly through all perplexities and doubts, and is once more glowing with Christian faith and love, closes the passage in ascription of praise and glory to God. He has had glimpses of heights that rise far above him, and of depths that are beyond his power to fathom. He does not foolishly profess to have perfectly compassed the inscrutable ways and unsearchable judgments of God. But he does believe that he has seen gleams of eternal light and truth, flashing in both the eastern and western skies, and that they proceed from one Divine and central Sun, God Himself, "of whom and through whom, and unto whom, are all things: to whom be glory for ever."

Some of the questions raised by these important chapters may be further briefly referred to.

1. Great difficulty has been found in harmonising chapters nine and ten, which set side by side in apparent antinomy the Divine sovereignty and human freedom. The difficulty, however, is not one that belongs to Paul's statement alone, or to theology; it is inherent in the nature of the case, and has been the age-long riddle of philosophy itself. On the one hand omnipotence is part of our conception of the Supreme Being, and on the other hand

this salvation of Israel is attained. He is simply considering God's dealings with the nation as a whole. As elsewhere throughout these chapters, St. Paul is dealing with peoples and classes of men. He looks forward in prophetic vision to a time when the whole earth, including the kingdoms of the Gentiles (τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν) and the people of Israel (πᾶς Ἰσραήλ), shall be united in the Church of God" (Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, p. 336).

human freedom is witnessed to by the final test of human consciousness, and is the essential postulate of all morality. But how all that happens should not only be foreknown but foreordained by God, and how at the same time man should be free and responsible from step to step, is a problem which, in spite of all the labours expended upon it, remains unsolved and insoluble. Paul does not attempt any explanation of the difficulty. He does not seem even to have been troubled by it; for in point of fact the tenth chapter is rather the recognition of a new set of truths than an apologetic qualification of anything already said. What he does is to set the two statements together as each a side of truth he had good reason to hold and believe. "God rejected Israel of His own good pleasure; and yet it was by their own fault. How are we to reconcile these conflicting statements? They do not need reconciliation; they are but the two opposite expressions of a religious mind, which says at one moment, 'Let me try to do right,' and at another, 'God alone can make me do right.' The two feelings may involve a logical contradiction, and yet exist together in fact and in the religious experience of mankind."[1] It would certainly have augured apostolic wisdom if contending theorists had thus been content to let the matter stand as Paul did. Calvinists would not then have anchored themselves so exclusively to the ninth

[1] Jowett, *Thessalonians*, ii. 384. An ingenious argument against Determinism is made by Professor W. James in one of his essays in *The Will to Believe*. He argues that free-will and Providence are not incompatible if only we allow God to provide *possibilities* as well as actualities to the universe. In that case there would be ample room for 'chance,' uncontrolled human choice, and the course of things would thus remain ambiguous from step to step, although the end would rigorously be secured as God had from all eternity intended. That is to say, the *upshot* is never ambiguous, and this must become more and more apparent as time rolls on. In which case the difficulty is not really escaped. Determinism is only made a question of time and degree. Divine control appears, and merely to refine it as 'invisible,' 'molecular,' 'slowly self-summating,' 'inspired' or 'delegated,' makes no difference to the fact. The illustration of a novice playing chess with a Master cannot be said to be very consoling. The 'liberty' man enjoys is very much that of the fish on the hook. A certain amount of sulk and dash is possible, but the landing-net is the inevitable finale.

chapter, nor Arminians entrenched themselves so completely in the tenth. As it is, the air has grown heavy with the dust of battle, and the study of the strife has become a weariness to the flesh. In modern theology at least the acrimony of the ancient controversy is passing away. The subject is one of alluring speculative interest, and will always have its place in the schools, but it is not likely to be treated by wise men with the old dogmatism, or to cause the old divisions.

"The endless controversy concerning Predestination and Free Will," writes Dean Mansel, "whether viewed in its speculative or in its moral aspect, is but another example of the hardihood of human ignorance. . . . This mystery, vast and inscrutable as it is, is but one aspect of a more general problem; it is but the moral form of the ever-recurring secret of the Infinite. How the Infinite and the Finite in any form of antagonism or other relation, can exist together;—how infinite power can coexist with finite activity: how infinite wisdom can coexist with finite contingency: how infinite goodness can coexist with finite evil: —how the Infinite can exist in any manner without exhausting the universe of reality:—this is the riddle which Infinite Wisdom alone can solve, the problem whose very conception belongs only to that Universal Knowing which fills and embraces the Universe of Being. When Philosophy can answer this question;—when she can even state intelligibly the notions which its terms involve,—then, and not till then, she may be entitled to demand a solution of the far smaller difficulties which she finds in revealed religion: or rather she will have solved them already; for from this they all proceed, and to this they all ultimately return."[1]

2. Again, the severe onesidedness of Paul's statement of the Divine sovereignty in the ninth chapter has been keenly and oppressively felt by all students of the passage, and not least by those who have most logically and strenuously upheld it. The 'hating' of Esau, the 'hardening' of Pharaoh, the 'vessels of wrath fitted unto

[1] *Limits of Religious Thought*, pp. 152, 156. Cf. also Mozley, *Treatise on Predestination* (ed. 1855), p. 327.

destruction' have fallen on Christian ears as hard sayings.[1] Many attempts have been made to mitigate them. Some find relief in the thought that the 'reprobation,' if it be such, is decreed in harmony with the Divine foreknowledge of the human perversity. We are referred to ch. viii. 29–30, where foreknowledge seems to be made the basis of predestination, and it is suggested that, though Paul does not attempt to resolve the speculative question, it would have been in this direction that he would have looked for its solution. It is doubtful, however, whether this be a correct interpretation of what Paul meant by 'foreknowledge,' and the explanation certainly seems to evade the unshaded force of the declaration of the sovereign 'will' (ix. 18).[2]

Others deny that anything like final reprobation enters into the Apostle's mind at all. He is not referring to individuals but to nations, and not to any eternal judgment but solely to rejection and discipline in the sphere of time. It is undoubtedly true that the general drift of Paul's thought concerns the historical relation of the gospel to nations, yet it is scarcely possible to read the particular statements in question, and to think that all individual reference is excluded from them. Even if it were, the difficulty would not be escaped. If there is severity to nations, surely there is severity to the individuals who compose the nations. "If we admit the principle that the free choice of nations is not inconsistent with Divine justice,

[1] Paul does not say "fitted *by God* unto destruction," yet a fair exegesis of the passage would seem to lead to this meaning. Gifford regards *both* God's judgments and man's perverse will as affecting the result. Sanday and Headlam think Paul purposely refrained from expressing the agency, because it was the result rather than the agent that was important to his argument. Meyer regards God as the agent; and Pfleiderer's note in adopting the same view is pretty decisive: he points to the parallelism of the clauses, and asks if it is not precisely the purpose of the whole section (vv. 14–23) to prove that hating as well as loving, severity as well as mercy, are matters of the free determination of the will of God. "Any admixture of subjective human causality in connection with these is a distortion of the sense, which, as clearly as possible, by the consistently worked out figure of the potter and his vessel, excludes all human causality" (*Paulinism*, i. 247).

[2] See the view discussed by Pfleiderer, *ibid.* i. 251–254.

we cannot refuse to admit the free choice of persons also. A little more or less of the doctrine cannot make it more or less reconcilable with the perfect justice of God."[1] Nor is it possible altogether to banish a significance beyond present experience from Paul's description of the Divine judgments. Such parallel phrases as "fitted unto destruction" and "prepared unto glory," have obviously more than a mere temporal meaning.

On the whole it is perhaps better frankly to acknowledge that here again we are confronted with a problem beyond our power to solve, a new antinomy—on the one hand the Divine election and rejection, and on the other the free offer of salvation to all men, accompanied with warnings to the accepted lest they fall away, and with appeals to the unprivileged to yield themselves unto God. No man can reconcile these opposite poles of the Apostle's doctrine. But it would be a hard thing to say that they are irreconcilable to a higher intelligence than ours. Paul at all events never understood the 'rejection' in such a sense as to refrain his lips from the tenderest appeals and intercessions. Nor did he ever dissociate Divine judgments from thoughts of Divine righteousness. God acts in perfect liberty, it is true, but that is a totally different thing from representing Him as acting independently of all moral considerations, in the mere wantonness of caprice. It was not so even with Pharaoh, nor was it so with the Jews. Nor should we allow the Divine purpose of "mercy upon all" entirely to escape from our thoughts. We can read it back into these puzzling verses as an inspired corrective against too decisive and strenuous conclusions. It is quite clear that Paul had Jeremiah in his mind when he used the image of the potter and the clay. It is not suitable to his present argument to recall all that the prophet learnt

[1] Jowett, *Thessalonians*, ii. 382. Beyschlag is the chief modern advocate of the national, historical interpretation, and the same view is also held by Gore in his paper in the *Studia Biblica*, iii. 44. Beyschlag's opinions are given in his *N. T. Theology*, ii. 114–120. He has also published them at greater length in a monograph entitled, *Die paulinische Theodicee: Römer* ix.–xi. (2 Aufl., 1895). But cf. Kühl, *Zur paulinischen Theodicee* (1897).

when he saw the potter at work upon the wheel. But the Christian Apostle no doubt agreed with the latter part of the 'sign' quite as much as with the former. "The vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hands of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it."[1] Paul, we may believe, would gladly have cast his problem back on the unbaffled skill and infinite wisdom of the Divine worker. So should we. There is One whose omnipotence is able to save even to the uttermost, who, impossible as it seems to our eyes, can yet

> "Amend what flaws may lurk,
> What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim!"

3. Finally, in these remarkable chapters Paul, as we have said, is viewing the gospel very largely, if not entirely, in its historical relations, and the election that he has chiefly before his mind is the election of nations. He thinks of their high calling of God, and the response they make to it. He thus expresses a philosophy of history from the religious point of view. He sees God's increasing purpose running through the ages, and he summarily expresses it by the phrase (xi. 32) "that He might have mercy upon all," that is, that all the nations of the earth might be brought into the kingdom of grace. If we reflect upon the utterances of God's inspired servants, and if above all we have eyes to perceive the meaning of His past actions, we can see the method by which He fulfils this purpose, and bears the world on to the Divine event. He works by a process of election. In His Divine wisdom He chooses some in preference to others to accomplish His ends. They are not distinguished by special merit but by peculiar fitness. In so far as they fulfil their designed mission the elect are blessed, and even those who for a time are rejected are not unblessed, should the discipline of their rejection lead ultimately to holier aspirations and a fuller faith. It is possible both for those who are chosen to fall away from their high calling, and for those who have

[1] Jeremiah xviii. 4.

temporarily slipped from their ideal to return to it again. Over all, God works as an Almighty power, giving and withholding, not to be judged at any moment by our imperfect understanding, and by our limited and partial vision, but justifying Himself at last in the final issue and in the eternal purpose of mercy and love.

We are able to discover this method of election at work, not in the history of the Jews alone, but in the history of all nations. We need not limit it even to directly religious ends, but may regard it as embracing everything that civilises, and that has a bearing on the Divine education of the human race. A lesson has to be learnt, and God, as it were, makes it graphic and emphatic by narrowing the circle within which it is expressed. It is intensified by limitation. It is made clear to the world in a nation, or even in the lives and voices of a nation's representative men. Thus Greece and Rome, with their heroes and sages, had their vocations no less than Israel and the prophets. And it ought to concern us that the Divine mode did not cease when the history of the world passed into the Christian phase. There is an election among the nations still. It was the opinion of our fathers, and should be ours, that Britain herself has been chosen of God for Divine ends. We cannot forget the lofty way in which Milton spoke: "Yet that which is above all this, the favour and the love of heaven, we have great argument to think in a peculiar manner propitious and propending towards us. Why else was this nation chosen before any other, that out of her, as out of Sion, should be proclaimed and sounded forth the first tidings and trumpet of reformation to all Europe? . . . Now once again by all concurrence of signs, and by the general instinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and solemnly express their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in His Church, even to the reforming of the reformation itself; what does He then but reveal Himself to His servants, and as His manner is, first to His Englishmen?"[1]

[1] *Areopagitica*, Prose Works (Bohn's ed.), ii. 91.

If we would still think and speak thus, let us remember that two things are implied in a Divine calling: first, that it is towards a God-like end; and secondly, that there is maintained a peculiar fitness and readiness for it. The potent phrase, "British interests," can scarcely be held to represent a high or ideal calling, if its reference be only to British dividends and aggrandisement. It would be nobler and truer if we recognised that the highest of British interests is "the kingdom of God and His righteousness." It were wisdom to apprehend the justification of the rejection of Israel. Israel thought of her election not as a vocation but as a destiny. Her profound mistake was that she regarded herself as called not so much to service as to privilege. It has been well said: "This is the besetting sin of all privileged classes. They turn into a monopoly of favour what Providence meant to be an opportunity of universal service. It is a grievous offence against the moral order of the world and the interests of mankind. Ultimately the offenders themselves are the greatest sufferers. An elect race, an *élite* section of society, that has got into the way of thinking only of its superiority, is a savourless salt whose inevitable doom is to be trodden under foot of men."[1]

There are some who believe that there is a danger of Britain falling into this error. God has "raised her up," and has enabled her to cast her branches over the sea, but not simply for her own prestige and glory. Something worthier must lie in the heart of it, and they are the true 'saviours' of her Empire who recognise in it a mission that is concerned with the Divine purpose of the 'fulness of the nations' and the 'mercy upon all.'

"God of our fathers, known of old—
Lord of our far-flung battle line—
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine—
Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

[1] Bruce, *Providential Order*, pp. 304–305.

If drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe—
Such boasting as the Gentiles use
Or lesser breeds without the law—
Lord God of hosts, be with us yet—
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard—
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And guarding calls not Thee to guard—
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy mercy on Thy people, Lord!"

### 3. Application of the Gospel to Christian Life; and Conclusion (Chs. xii.–xvi.).

We come now to the last section of the Epistle—the application of the gospel to Christian life.

All-important as union with Christ and the indwelling of the Spirit are, their ends are not accomplished without regard to human effort and activity. Man is a fellow-labourer with God in salvation, because he must work out what God worketh in him both to will and to do, for His good pleasure. For "if our virtues did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike as if we had them not." And one who has lived long with Christ, like the Apostle, and has drunk deeply of His Spirit, has a title in the very riches of his experience to speak of the maxims and principles that should guide the daily life of his brethren.

Thus the Epistle passes from the great themes of faith and destiny to the common practical duties of every day, the relation of believers to one another, and to the affairs of the great world by which they are surrounded. "One portion of it follows the other, like the different divisions of a great musical composition, in which an opening, wonderful at once with storm and with light, full of conceptions and passages which strain our thoughts to the utmost and search out the very depths of emotion and sympathy, is succeeded by a movement which relaxes the tension

of our minds, transporting us into a new domain of feeling, incorporating and yet giving new significance to familiar melodies, which speak of the trials, the affections, the duties of our common life." [1]

Broadly speaking, this final passage (chs. xii. 1–xv. 13) deals with three subjects, the ordinary life of the Christian, his relation to the civil power, and his bearing in controversy as to scrupulous points of conscience.

The first part is prefaced by a call to complete consecration as the necessary foundation of Christian character. Henceforth, if we have accepted the gospel, we are entirely God's, "not our own, but bought with a price." Starting from that, we should recognise our responsibility in the special gifts for service which God in His grace has bestowed upon us. However varied these gifts may be, one great law applies to them, namely, that we should thoughtfully and modestly devote ourselves to their exercise, with the supreme desire to advance the welfare of the whole body of believers. Following that counsel, many rules are given for the guidance of the Christian in his social relations. In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord laid the foundations of the practical life, and Paul clearly shows that echoes of that Sermon were present in his mind. He had often heard reports of it, and perhaps it had already been reduced to writing.[2] His leading thoughts are a high standard of righteousness and zeal, and a pervading spirit of love and peace. The Apostle desires, like the Master,

[1] Dean Church, *Human Life and its Conditions*, p. 34.

[2] The resemblances have been often noted. "It is not too much to add," says Knowling, "that the Apostle's description of the kingdom of God (ch. xiv. 17) reads like a brief summary of its description in the Sermon on the Mount: the righteousness, peace, and joy, which form the contents of the kingdom in the Apostle's conception, are found side by side in the Saviour's Beatitudes" (*Witness of the Epistles*, p. 312).

Only one conclusion can be drawn from such resemblances of thought and expression, and that is "that there must have been a common teaching of Jesus behind the Apostle's words, which was identical in spirit, and substantially in words, with that contained in our Synoptic Gospels. . . . It is very probable that much more of the common teaching, and even phraseology, of the early Church than we are accustomed to imagine goes back to the teaching of Jesus" (Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, p. 382).

that Christians should be distinguished as lights in the world, and that they should not easily suffer their unity and harmony to be broken. Sincerity, zeal, steadfastness in persecution, diligence, prayerfulness, benevolence, sympathy, humility, forbearance, forgiveness, earnestness, alertness, purity, are earnestly commended, one after another, in pregnant and memorable phrases.

Paul then passes to give his counsel regarding the attitude of the Christian to civil life. The question might arise in some minds: 'If vengeance be the Lord's alone, as you have just said, does that mean that it is not permissible for any human power to restrain men in their transgressions?' Nay, answers the Apostle, there must be such a restraint, otherwise all social order would be at an end. For many purposes, and chiefly as a terror to evil-doers and a praise to them that do well, God has delegated a certain authority to the rulers of the State. They are, in a sense, God's ministers, and their power of control, being for the social welfare, has a Divine sanction. It is a Christian's duty, therefore, to submit to them, not as good policy merely, nor as a necessity of *force majeure*, but as a matter of conscience, because he recognises in their office an appointment of God. Paul cannot forget that in enunciating this principle he is writing to the very headquarters of human authority, the fountain of civil law and order, whose influence and power were felt over the whole civilised world. He may have been conscious, too, that in that Capital many of his countrymen had earned an evil reputation for tumult and insubordination. Jewish rebellion against the Imperial yoke had more than a national impulse. With many it sprang from a religious conviction, depending on their theocratic views. God alone should be their lawgiver, and it was a question that lay deep with them whether it were 'lawful' to give tribute to Cæsar. Paul may also have observed that there was a similar tendency among certain Christians. Christ had become their lawgiver and their king; was it not a disloyalty to Him to yield obedience to another? The Apostle earnestly answers, No: because there is a sense in which the authority of

the other is also His. Christ's aims are wider than you think. He takes under Him also the relations of social life. Good order in that life is part of His Divine will. To transgress it is to sin against Him. Therefore, of all men Christians ought to be the best citizens, simply because they are bound to make conscience of submission.

Of course such teaching goes far, and rightly so, but it is evident it is not without limitation. It were mere madness to deduce from it a doctrine of absolute non-resistance, independent of all considerations. The civil ruler should be a minister of God for good. That is the ideal. But what if he should annul his own ideal, and become rather a minister of evil? Revolutions have sometimes been justifiable, and the cry of passive obedience in such cases has been the mere screaming of selfish sycophancy. Granted the Divine right to rule, the question may arise, Is that right *yours?* Can you justify your claim? On what does it depend? Or, suppose that the ruler crosses into a sphere that is not civil but spiritual, and that there he legislates and coerces on matters not committed to him. In Bible language, he "lords it over God's heritage." To insist on passive obedience then would be to blot out some of the noblest episodes of human story. Clearly there are things which are not Cæsar's. Christ saw the distinction, and so did Paul. The pity is that in the history of Christianity it has been so often obscured. Church and State have encroached on each other's sphere over with sorrow and disaster to both. In Florence in Savonarola's day the Medici used to say: "The State cannot be governed by paternosters." On the other hand, it has to be said: "Neither can the Church of Christ be governed by Acts of Parliament." A free Church in a free State would not be alien to the Pauline conception. But a Church controlled even partially by unbelievers, or a State manipulated in the interests of priestcraft, decidedly would. "For the lawyers," writes Gore, "trained for quite other purposes, to be exercising the Church's right of spiritual judgment on matters of Christian doctrine and worship, seems to many of us an intolerable instance of misplaced

authority, which it is our sacred duty not to admit. . . . It makes an enormous difference whether it [the Church] is a self-governing society or no. . . . The idea of the Roman State controlling or legislating upon matters of religion did not occur to the Apostle. If the idea had suggested itself to him, we cannot doubt that his reply would have been in the spirit of Christ's words, 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.' It is really as much out of place to quote 'the powers that be are ordained of God' with reference to State control of Christian doctrine or worship, as it would be to quote 'we ought to obey God rather than man' as a justification for refusing the reasonable obedience of a citizen to the ordinary law."[1]

Finally, the Apostle treats of conscientious differences among Christians themselves. Such differences arose inevitably in almost all the Churches. Some started scruples about such things as meats and the religious observances of particular days, and the brethren who had never experienced such difficulties were immediately drawn into discussion. The supreme aim of the Apostle is to inculcate the principle of mutual forbearance and toleration. There are many things that can scarcely be said to enter into the substance of the faith, and it is a sign of gracelessness to allow them to become sources of dissension. Wrong as it is to override conscience, even in a small matter, it is a still more terrible fault, if Christians would realise it, to rupture the Body of Christ. Whether Paul is actually referring to a definite division of opinion in the Church at Rome, is not altogether clear. If there were a real cleavage on such matters, it is probable, but only probable, that a minority of Jewish converts, holding views of an Essenic type, had entered the Church.[2] On the other

[1] Gore, *Contemporary Review*, April 1899, pp. 462–463. Cf. also Godet's instructive note, *Comm.* ii. 318–319.

[2] Hort, *Judaistic Christianity*, p. 128, says that there is no tangible evidence that Essenism had penetrated beyond Palestine. This may be perfectly true, and yet human influences are very subtle and penetrative. It is quite possible to conceive that men who were not Essenes, yet who knew

hand, it is quite possible that throughout the passage Paul is only in a general way anticipating evils, which his experience had abundantly taught him must be guarded against. His own evident sympathy is not with the 'weak' but with the 'strong,' that is, with the men of larger and more liberal views, who were really persuaded that 'nothing is unclean of itself.' But he would not have been of large and liberal views if he had regarded the scruples of others only with contempt and derision. That is where too many fail and lose their 'largeness.' Paul holds the balance level. Men are to be persuaded in their own minds. They are to remember that Christ is the Judge of all, and that their present chief concern should be lest one should put an occasion of falling in another's way. I have liberty, says the Apostle, and I rejoice in it. But I would a thousand times rather curtail it, than by using it cause my brother to offend. The Lord's example should ever rise in majesty before our eyes, "For Christ also pleased not Himself." Thus the call to love, and to love like Christ, is the supreme rule of Christian character. In it lies, if not the solving of all our problems, at least the healing of all our strife.

With many friendly greetings,[1] notes of loving admiration, and kindly intimation of his personal plans, the Apostle brings his great Epistle to a close. It has occupied us long, but not longer than its mighty themes, and its unique handling of them, demand. If to any extent we have elucidated the great paradoxes of Paul's faith, such sayings as even an apostolic writer found 'hard to be understood,' or made clear, not so much what has

what Essenism was, might leave Palestine, and afterwards, under the influence of new religious feelings, might develop ideas and customs that were of a distinctly Essenic type. But Hort agrees that "the relations of Jew and Gentile were directly or indirectly involved in the relations of the weak and the strong" (*Prolegomena to Romans*, p. 29). Gifford thinks the weak were the Jewish converts, and the passage a proof that they were not the predominant part of the Church at Rome. *Romans*, p. 216.

[1] These have already been referred to, and the critical question considered, whether they belong to the Epistle, or are part of a Note to Ephesus. *Vide supra*, pp. 200–202.

been the interpretation of this school or that, but what is at least the broad trend of the Apostle's thought, the time spent will not have been in vain. Paul's own conclusion is a perfect summary, both in thought and spirit, of all that he has said:

NOW TO HIM THAT IS ABLE TO STABLISH YOU ACCORDING TO MY GOSPEL AND THE PREACHING OF JESUS CHRIST, ACCORDING TO THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY WHICH HATH BEEN KEPT IN SILENCE THROUGH TIMES ETERNAL, BUT NOW IS MANIFESTED, AND BY THE SCRIPTURES OF THE PROPHETS, ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT OF THE ETERNAL GOD, IS MADE KNOWN UNTO ALL THE NATIONS UNTO OBEDIENCE OF FAITH; TO THE ONLY WISE GOD, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, BE THE GLORY FOR EVER. AMEN.

# III.

# THE CAPTIVITY EPISTLES.

COLOSSIANS.

PHILEMON.

EPHESIANS.

PHILIPPIANS.

Close acquaintance with the strange doctrines and misconceptions that were being taught in the Lycus valley furnished the Apostle with startling parallels, striking antitheses, and grand and decisive words, which widened the field of the gospel preaching, and at the same time favoured its scientific working out. There was developed from this contact with new opposites a gospel metaphysics, which held fast to the doctrine of the divinity of the person of Jesus, but took God as the standpoint whence to view the work of salvation, rather than the individual consciousness, as had been usual before.—**Reuss.**

The Epistle to Philemon brings out the marked difference between the Gospel method of action and the way in which men set to work to accomplish social revolutions. It was not by calling on the unhappy slaves to rise in armed rebellion against their masters that the Gospel struck off their fetters. It rather melted them by the fervour of Christian love, and so penetrated society with the principles of the Gospel that emancipation became a necessity.—**Godet.**

To all ages of the Church—to our own especially—the Epistle to the Philippians reads a great lesson. While we are expending our strength on theological definitions or ecclesiastical rules, it recalls us from these distractions to the very heart and centre of the Gospel—the life of Christ and the life in Christ. Here is the meeting-point of all our differences, the healing of all our feuds, the true life alike of individuals and sects and churches: here doctrine and practice are wedded together; for here is the 'Creed of creeds' involved in and arising out of the Work of works.—**Lightfoot.**

# THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

THE third group of the Epistles consists of Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians. They are all Epistles of captivity. The three first-mentioned are intimately related; they were written about the same time, and carried to their destination by the hand of the same messenger. Philemon is simply a private appendix to Colossians, while between Colossians and Ephesians there is great similarity in theme and phraseology. Philippians stands by itself, though the interval of separation from its companions is probably not great.

We know that Paul's forebodings about his visit to Jerusalem, when he bore thither the Gentile offerings to the poor Saints, were only too sadly verified. As the result of a fanatical Jewish outburst, he fell into the custody of the Romans, and was retained a prisoner for over four years. Two years were spent in Cæsarea, and two, after a long and memorable journey, in Rome. The question, therefore, arises—to which period of his captivity do the Epistles belong? Were they written in Cæsarea or in Rome, or partly in the one and partly in the other?

If we start with the point which seems most certain, and on which there is the greatest amount of agreement, we may safely say that Philippians was written in Rome. The very fact that the issue of the trial is spoken of as one of life or death, is almost in itself conclusive, because such an issue could scarcely have been contemplated in Cæsarea, where the Apostle knew that at any moment he could exercise his right of appeal. Moreover, the

evangelical outlook of the Epistle, the keen anxiety, and yet the hope of speedy deliverance, the reference to the saints of Cæsar's household, and to the 'prætorium' in the permissible sense of the Prætorian Guard, all point in the same direction.

Now, if we could conclude that Philippians preceded the three Asiatic Epistles, then of course it would follow that they also were written in Rome. But the relative dates are a matter of much uncertainty. Lightfoot has argued strongly in favour of giving the priority to Philippians.[1] His more positive reasons are mainly based on considerations of subject-matter, which incline him on the one hand to put Philippians as near as possible to Romans (yet after all not nearer than three years),[2] and on the other hand to remove the three Epistles with their new themes and peculiar expressions[3] as far away as possible, in order to allow for the necessary development. No doubt it is a sound principle that development requires time. But it is doubtful if the application is of great value with regard to the point at present at issue. Theological movement at Colosse, and Paul's power to deal with it, do not necessarily imply that a contemporaneous or subsequent letter to Philippians must be coloured by such facts. Date Colossians when we may, Philippians might still come after. Paul had sufficient faculty of intellectual detachment to write to Philippi exactly as the occasion required, and it would have been very unlike him at any stage, late or early, to write to his converts there on matters that were probably quite foreign to their religious experience. Let the Epistles be drawn apart as far as possible, yet within the Roman period there cannot be more than fifteen months at the very utmost between

[1] *Philippians*, pp. 32 sqq.

[2] A few commentators get Philippians much nearer to Romans by regarding it as written in Cæsarea. So Macpherson, *Ephesians*, pp. 86–87.

[3] It should also be remembered, however, that there is a remarkable affinity in thought and expression between Colossians and Philippians. These resemblances have been discussed by Von Soden, and are enumerated by Abbott in the International Crit. Comm. on *Colossians*, pp. lviii–lix.

them—a consideration which does much to deprive of cogency any argument as to priority drawn from development.

On the other hand, the indications in Philippians that it was written towards the close of the imprisonment are not easily set aside. There have evidently been communications between Philippi and Rome, possibly three or four in number, which must have occupied some months. Paul also describes the influence of his example "in bonds" both on those who are Christian and on those who are not, in a way that not merely implies a considerable residence, but suggests a prominence such as was most likely during the actual trial. Timothy is with him when all the Epistles are written, but when Philippians is written it is said that he will shortly be sent to the East. Luke and Aristarchus, it is generally believed, are with him when he arrives in Rome, and they are mentioned in Colossians and Philemon, but are not mentioned in Philippians, and indeed could scarcely have been present when he wrote the words, "I have no one like-minded." But above all, the whole tone of Philippians seems to reveal that Paul is conscious that he now stands at the very crisis of his affairs. The possibility of a sad issue to his trial is real enough to throw over him many shadows of anxiety. Nor do his friends stand by him either so stoutly or so numerously as he could wish. Nevertheless, he has much to cheer him, and he cannot let go the hope that the decision which he soon expects, will be in his favour. Such alternations of hope and fear deepen the impression that the Epistle belongs to the close and climax of the period rather than to its beginning.

If this be so, then the three earlier Epistles are set free, and it is possible that they may have been written in Cæsarea. A considerable number of scholars adopt this view.[1] Their leading arguments may be described as geographical and historical. In Philippians, Paul, writing

[1] *E.g.*, Schulz, Thiersch, Schenkel, Zöckler, Meyer, Reuss, Hausrath, Pfleiderer, Weiss, Sabatier.

from Rome, announces his intention of proceeding after his release to Philippi; but in Philemon he speaks of going to Colosse. It is thought that the difference shows that he did not write Philemon also in Rome. It is again urged that his manner of ordering a lodging to be ready for him at Colosse, would have been very strained if he wrote from a place so far distant as the Capital. Such criticism, however, is too rigid. Paul may surely be allowed to modify his problematical plans as circumstances dictate; nor was there anything to prevent him journeying from Rome to Phrygia *viâ* Macedonia. As to the lodging, the order would be strained enough even from Cæsarea if taken *de rigueur*, and, as Hort suggests, we should doubtless take it as a playful yet earnest announcement to Philemon that the Apostle meant to see with his own eyes how it would fare with the returned slave.

Weiss further recalls the account Tacitus[1] gives of an earthquake which destroyed Laodicea in A.D. 60 or 61 ("Nerone IV."), and which he thinks may probably be the same as one mentioned by Eusebius in which Colosse also suffered. If, therefore, Paul wrote to Colosse about that time, when he was in Rome, he must surely have made reference to the catastrophe. On this Vincent wittily remarks that "it is possible to found a valid argument upon an earthquake; but in this case the tremors of the earthquake pervade the argument."[2] It is really impossible to lay stress on it, for the simple reason that Tacitus is a very untrustworthy guide on such a matter. The date Eusebius gives is four years later, when both periods of captivity were over, and according to critics most entitled to give such a judgment, Eusebius is much more likely to be correct.[3] In any case an inference from mere silence is too precarious.

Lastly, in favour of a Roman origin in preference to

[1] *Annals*, xiv. 27.

[2] *Philippians and Philemon*, p. 161.

[3] Cf. Schiller, *Nero*, p. 160 n. 6; 172 n. 6; and Lightfoot, *Colossians* pp. 39–40.

. Cæsarean, not only should Lightfoot's argument from development have here considerable weight, but the imperialistic ideas and illustrations which characterise the Epistles seem to indicate that Paul had breathed the atmosphere of the Capital. Nor ought we to omit to notice that it is more probable that the runaway slave, Onesimus, should flee to the city of Rome as a hiding-place, and that he should there be allowed to approach Paul in the liberty of the hired house, than that he should have gone to Cæsarea, and found a ready admittance to the palace.[1]

On the whole, therefore, we may accept the general opinion that the three Asiatic Epistles were also written in Rome. Whether Colossians or Ephesians should come first in the group is comparatively a small matter, on which we really have no data of a decisive character. The grounds on which priority is usually based are mainly of a subjective kind, according as individual writers think that a general or a special treatment is the more likely to have come first. The opinion expressed by Godet seems very probable: "that of two letters the one complementary to the other, the one that was evoked by a positive request and a determinate need, preceded, and that the other, not more general, as is often wrongly said, but more devoted to a subject closely related to that of the first, was due to the more extensive consideration that the composition of the former had called forth."[2]

Paul, then, was a prisoner in Rome when he wrote the Epistle to the Colossians. His captivity was not of a very stringent character. The centurion who brought him to Italy delivered him into the hands of a superior officer, who thenceforth became responsible for his safe

[1] Cf. Klöpper, *Der Brief an die Colosser*, p. 50. On the contrary, cf. Meyer, *Ephesians* (ed. 1895), p. 19.

[2] *Introduction*, p. 491. Cf. also Weiss, *Introduction*, i. 347: "It is most natural to suppose that the Epistle designed for concrete needs was written first." Klöpper, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, p. 7, describes Ephesians as "a remodelled, catholicised Colossians."

custody.[1] He was allowed to live—most likely in close proximity to the soldiers' quarters—in a hired lodging of his own, where his friends had every liberty of access, although he himself was under the constant surveillance of a guard, to whom he was lightly chained by the wrist. Thus at last he beheld the great city he had longed so much to visit. It was passing through a strange and ominous time. The Emperor's mother was dead, and his wife was divorced; the influences of his noblest general and of his sagest counsellor were fast waning, while every day the star of the licentious Poppæa Sabina was rising in the ascendant. Nero's true character was plainly revealing itself, and the mad and criminal career had begun which has handed his name down in infamy through the ages. Paul could not be ignorant of such things. The soldiers and his friends would bring them often enough to his ears. But he makes no allusion to them in his Epistles. Doubtless it would not have been safe; and besides, his mind was deeply occupied with other concerns. The imperial movements did not yet touch him closely, though the day hurried when they would rush round him like an angry storm, play havoc with the Church, and sweep away his own feeble life like a trembling leaf upon the gale. But much had to happen, and Rome itself had to spread its lurid flames over the sky, before the sword of the first imperial persecution leapt from its scabbard.

There was no haste displayed in bringing the Apostle to trial. The Emperor probably heard of his appeal with complete indifference; and those who had to sustain against him the charge of sedition were but little encouraged by the report of Festus, and doubtless found it somewhat difficult to collect their witnesses, and get

[1] The phrase specifying the "captain of the guard" in Acts xxviii. 16 cannot be retained in the text; yet it doubtless represents a correct tradition. It is doubtful, however, if the word στρατοπεδάρχος refers to so exalted an officer as the Prefect of the Prætorians. Ramsay, following Mommsen, identifies the title with Princeps Peregrinorum, the chief of "soldiers from abroad," *i.e.* those who had been detached from legions in the provinces for special service, and whose camp in Rome was situated on the Cælian Hill. *St. Paul the Traveller*, pp. 347-348.

their case in train. Paul thus found himself for a while at leisure to devote himself to the work he loved better than life. The members of the Christian communities soon discovered their way to his dwelling, and in course of time others also had their interest awakened, and came from sympathy or curiosity to listen to his preaching. The continual intercourse with the soldiery gave him unique opportunities which he was quick to use, so that strange ears heard his message, and his very limitations gave him scope. With joy he beheld the word of life, like a new wonder, growing and multiplying in his hands. Many personal friends, too, stood by him in the early days, and made the yoke of his captivity light. Luke and Aristarchus had apparently travelled with him from Syria, though it is not necessary to think that they did so as his "slaves."[1] Timothy and Tychicus soon joined him, and Mark also, with whom he was now happily reconciled. In a short time many of the most distant Churches were represented in his circle. He delighted to feel that their care was still upon him, and to hear of their welfare from the lips of men who had most recent and intimate knowledge of their affairs. Conspicuous among such bearers of good tidings was Epaphras, the minister of Colosse, and it was his arrival that gave rise to the present Epistle. The Church at Colosse had not been founded by Paul, nor had he ever seen it. On the third missionary journey, according to the South-Galatian theory, Paul proceeded from Pisidian Antioch to Ephesus. The great highway that ran between these cities passed through Colosse and Laodicea. The Apostle, however, does not seem to have taken that frequented route, but one farther north and more among the hills, indicated in Acts xix. 1 by the phrase, "having passed through the upper country." This road was at that time of the nature of a footpath among the hills, but it afterwards formed part of the Byzantine route through Asia Minor when the ancient highway fell into disuse. Yet

[1] So Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller*, p. 316.

although Paul had never actually visited the Church of Colosse, it was one of the outlying results of his missionary labours in Ephesus, so that he was well entitled to address it.

In Græco-Roman times a great road ran directly eastward from Ephesus across Asia Minor towards the Euphrates. About a hundred miles inland it entered the valley of the Lycus, which takes its name from a stream that flows forty miles westward from Lake Anava to the Meander. This valley slopes gradually upward to the great central plateau of the country, and is divided into two long stretches of about equal length by a step or ridge, which rapidly raises the more inland part several hundred feet above the level of the other. In the centre of the lower valley lay the cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis, while Colosse stood near the ridge which marks the start of the eastern glen. The highway passed through Laodicea and Colosse at a distance of about eleven miles, while Hierapolis lay apart on the hillside about six miles north of Laodicea. The three thus formed a small triangular group of inland towns, belonging to the proconsular province of Asia, and in all of them the light of the gospel was already burning.

Laodicea is not only mentioned in this Epistle as the recipient of a Pauline letter, but is also famous as being one of St. John's "Seven Churches of Asia." It was a busy centre of commerce, well situated in the midst of a pastoral district, noted for its wool, glossy and black as a raven's wing, and for its manufactures of cloth, rugs, carpets, and such like. It was indeed "rich and had need of nothing," a city of bankers and capitalists, so wealthy, the historian tells us,[1] that when it was devastated by earthquake, it speedily rose again, like a Phœnix from the dust, without needing any assistance from the State. It was celebrated for its medical school and its devotion to Æsculapius, its physicians being specially distinguished in treating diseases of the eye.[2] Hence there was peculiar

[1] Tacitus, *Ann.* xiv. 27.

[2] Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, i. 52.

fitness in the warning metaphors of Revelation: "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." The city remained notable in Christian annals down to the time of the Mohammedan invasions, when it was laid waste never to recover. To-day it presents a melancholy appearance, with little about its grey ruins to attract attention. Multitudes of reptiles swarm among its scattered stones, and humanity gives it a wide berth, save for a few gipsies who camp near it in the spring-time, and occasional groups of masons from Denizli who hew its sculptured marbles into tombstones.[1]

Hierapolis was even more famous in olden time, and is now, if possible, even more desolate. It rejoiced in what Laodicea had not, a magnificent situation of almost unique attractiveness. It stood on a large plateau on the top of a precipitous cliff, and was flanked and sheltered by finely wooded hills. Its air was pure and delightful, and the view it commanded to the east and south and west, over fertile fields and winding rivers, was one of entrancing beauty. The cliff[2] on which it rested was one of the wonders of nature. Seen from a distance it gleamed with dazzling whiteness, and near at hand it had the appearance of a vast frozen cascade, as of waters arrested in their fall, their petrified masses taking the most varied and fantastic shapes. This was due to the fact that hot springs bubbled up in the centre of the plateau, and sent over the cliff streams strongly impregnated with carbonate of lime, which constantly deposited its fine silvery crystals, and incrustated everything it passed over. The phenomenon still exists, and the results are still wonderful. The stream has passed over the edge by different channels, and has formed innumerable pools or basins of various levels

[1] Cf. Hamilton's *Researches in Asia Minor*, i. 515; Svoboda, *Seven Churches of Asia*, pp. 24–26; Davis, *Anatolica*, p. 96.

[2] According to Svoboda, 400 feet high, and more than 1000 yards in extent.

and sizes, many of which are supported by thick stalactite columns in regular rows like the pipes of an organ.[1] The pearly grey and blue water is continually glancing and flowing in these pools, with the most beautiful opalescent effects, as if the whole cliff were in motion. Farther across the plateau, and near the foot of the hills, is another spring, whose waters are charged with carbonic acid gas and sulphuretted hydrogen, exhaling vapours that are deadly to animals, as the ancients believed, and to all men also except the priests.[2] This well appears at one time to have been enclosed by a temple, as the bottom of it is now strewn with columns and sculptured debris, probably cast there by the Christians, who would look on the place as a kind of outlet of Tophet. Thus endowed, Hierapolis enjoyed a great reputation, sedulously cultivated, as a holy city, and was much frequented as a health resort by wealthy invalids. Claiming to cure all diseases, it was the Lourdes and Spa of Phrygia, splendidly adorned with many costly and magnificent buildings. Its most significant remains to-day, however, are its tombs. These are innumerable, monumental, and highly artistic, stretching away to east and west in long, pathetically eloquent streets.

Hidden by jutting hills from view from Hierapolis, Colosse lay on the banks of the Lycus at the spot where that river makes a rapid and turbulent plunge through a deep ravine to the valley below. It had so utterly passed from ken that it is only in recent times that its site has been correctly identified.[3] It once enjoyed a reputation very similar to that of Laodicea, but waned doubtless as its rival prospered, and finally decayed altogether as the new Byzantine routes diverted the traffic from the old

[1] Cf. the interesting photograph in Davis's *Anatolica*, p. 99.

[2] It is the carbonic acid that holds the lime in solution, until the gas escapes into the air, when the lime precipitates. Frankland, in Svoboda's Appendix.

[3] By Hamilton, *Researches in Asia Minor* (1842), i. 509, in October, 1836; by Laborde also, but less precisely, in 1826, *Voyage de l'Asie Mineure*.

highway.[1] The spot to-day is only marked by a bridge, a few wretched mills, and heaps of stones scattered on both sides of the river. We know nothing of the origin of the town, and cannot tell even the meaning of its name. Its memory lingered till the close of the eighth century, but after that it was so completely forgotten that some believed Paul's Epistle was written to the Rhodians, who were also called Colossians from their famous colossus.[2]

But though Colosse may have been a place of small importance in itself, there had arisen a state of matters in the Church there, and probably also in the neighbouring Churches, that threatened deeply to affect the gospel. Views of a subtle heretical character began to show themselves, and gave alarm to the anxious heart of Epaphras. He felt unable to deal with them, and apparently thought it imperative to make the long journey to Rome for the purpose of seeking Paul's advice. The Apostle was quick to perceive that the new views contained elements of grave danger. They were not likely to die down of themselves; they must be met and confuted: hence his Epistle.

Nor was this danger to evangelical truth much to be wondered at. Colosse was a Phrygian town, and as such offered a soil peculiarly fitted for the reception of fantastic notions in religion. The worship of Cybele, with all its manifold mysteries and superstitions, was deeply rooted in the district, and gave the native mind a tendency to mystical extravagances, from which it never, even in the Christian centuries, shook itself free. Moreover the town was on the highway that connected the East and West, and was constantly affected by the influx of travellers, frequently zealots, who brought with them the opinions and speculations of the outer world. The ubiquitous Jews had also been long established in the valley of the Lycus. Not only do we know that Antiochus the Great had planted large colonies of them there, but in Cicero's

[1] Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics*, p. 209.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 214.

defence of Flaccus the Temple-tax referred to is so large as to imply a very considerable Jewish population.

What the state of affairs actually was we can only infer from the Epistle itself. Evidently the heretical teaching had not done vital injury, but was threatening to do so. The Apostle addresses the Colossians as if they were not yet 'moved away from the hope of the gospel,' and as if it were needful only to exhort them to 'continue in the faith.' He speaks even in admiration of their faith and steadfastness. We are therefore in the presence, not so much of a direct antagonism to the gospel, as of certain specious and enticing errors which threatened to supersede it. The intention was to lead to something higher; and therein lay the insidious peril. Christ was not denied, but He was in danger of being passed over. The central purpose, therefore, which has possession of the Apostle's mind, is to make clear the fatal error of superseding Christ in any way, of vainly dreaming that a higher knowledge or a fuller life can be attained without Him. In Him alone we are 'complete,' 'perfect'; and in Him all 'fulness,' and 'all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,' dwell.

This dreaded teaching Paul describes generally as enticing words, the philosophy and vain deceit, the tradition of men, the rudiments of the world. More particularly he indicates that it inculcated scruples regarding meat, drink, holy days, new moons, sabbaths, and that it was characterised by voluntary humility, worshipping of angels, visions, ascetic ordinances, will-worship, and severity to the body. From his use of the terms wisdom, knowledge, philosophy, we may infer that he is rebutting a certain pretentiousness that posed as something higher than the ordinary. He seems also to dread a tendency to spiritual exclusiveness in opposition to the spirit of the preaching which warns every man, teaches every man, and seeks to make every man perfect, whether Greek or Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free. From the references also to the angelic hierarchies, the principalities and powers of the invisible world, as well as to visions and angelolatry, it is evident he is nervously

conscious of teaching in the highest degree inimical to the supremacy of Christ.

Here, then, we have obviously two main elements closely related to each other. The one is a kind of theosophy, familiar to the Oriental mind, in which men sought to define the relation of the Supreme Being to a sinful world by means of a series of intermediary existences, whose gradually fading remoteness from Him made evil conceivable. Allied with this, indeed at its base, is the further notion that evil resides in material and perishing things; and that consequently the way of emancipation is by a rigorous asceticism, a stern repression of the body, whereby we are not only freed from sensual bondage, but enabled to enter into closer communion with the spiritual world, and first of all, in a becoming humility, with the lower stages of its life. Only those who entered upon this path could ever hope to become perfect, and the wisdom or knowledge they attained was true philosophy.[1]

Undoubtedly it is a matter of interest to consider whence such doctrines were derived, and how they came to be mixed up with the Christianity of Colosse; but it is quite impossible to point to any precise historical origin. Such views were in the air at that time, and here we are evidently meeting the first elementary stages, in thought and language and life, of what in a few generations later became the well-defined systems of Christian Gnosticism.[2]

[1] Dean Mansel, *Gnostic Heresies*, p. 53, defines the incipient Gnosticism present in Colossians as follows: "First; it pretended, under the plausible name of *philosophy*, to be in possession of a higher knowledge of spiritual things than could be obtained through the simple preaching of the gospel. Secondly; it adopted the common tenet of all the Gnostic sects, that of a distinction between the supreme God and the Demiurgos or creator of the world. Thirdly; by virtue of its pretended insight into the spiritual world, it taught a theory of its own concerning the various orders of angels and the worship to be paid to them. And fourthly; in connection with these theories, it enjoined and adopted the practice of a rigid asceticism, extending and exaggerating the ceremonial prohibitions of the Jewish law, and probably connecting them with a philosophical theory concerning the evil nature of matter."

[2] The genuineness of Colossians is considered, and further reference made to Gnosticism, in discussing Ephesians: pp. 348–352: 361–368.

A moment's glance discovers a Jewish influence. The references to new moons, sabbaths, and circumcision, make that obvious, and the phrase, 'the traditions and commandments of men,' was a common one to apply to Pharisaic customs. Nor is it necessary to go outside Jewish circles for the ascetic practices and the cult of the angels. These were well-known features of Essenism, and even though there is no distinct evidence that the sect of the Essenes existed beyond the bounds of Palestine, its tenets and customs must have been to some extent a portable property with the Jews wherever they wandered. This was the case in Alexandria and Rome, and may easily have been so in Ephesus and Colosse. It is accordingly the common opinion that the heresy with which Paul deals is an incipient Gnosticism, due more or less to Essenic influences. It is scarcely necessary, however, to enter into researches in Essenism on this account; for, after all, Essenism as a system is more conspicuously absent from the Epistle than present. Contact of the Jewish mind of the Dispersion with the speculative Orientalism which was to be found everywhere in the first century, is quite sufficient to account for the facts; and while it would no doubt be a mistake to ignore the implicit references of the Epistle, it is on the other hand as great a mistake to read too much between the lines.[1]

Sincerely alarmed, yet confident it was not too late to deal with the situation, Paul wrote his Epistle. He begins with very kindly references to the brethren whom he has never seen, rejoicing in the good report of their faith and love. He assures them of his unceasing prayers on their behalf, that they may be strengthened in the Lord, and that they may fully recognise how much they owe to the goodness of God in drawing them into the kingdom of His

[1] It would almost seem as if Hort had fallen into the former error and Lightfoot into the latter. Cf. Hort's *Judaistic Christianity*, pp. 116 sqq.; Lightfoot's *Colossians*, pp. 70 sqq. One cannot but rejoice, however, that Lightfoot's views led him to his Dissertations on the Essenes. The Essenic influence is also very fully discussed by Klöpper, *Der Brief an die Colosser*, Einl. § 8, Die Irrlehre.

dear Son. The mention of Christ introduces a rapturous description of His pre-eminent glory: the Image of God, the First-born of all Creation, by whom and for whom all things were created, and through whom all are reconciled to God; the Head also of the Church, and not least the Saviour of the Colossians themselves, that is, if they should continue in the faith of the gospel, that blessed 'mystery' of divine grace, of which he, Paul, is himself honoured to be a minister, for which he suffers joyfully, and by which he labours for the blessing of all men, that all may be made perfect in Christ.

A few more words of renewed affection, and the Apostle speaks directly, in tones of earnest warning and appeal, of the teaching whose enticing words and perilous tendencies fill him with so much concern. Its central error is that it ignores the supreme place to which Christ alone is entitled; the Lord to whom they owe everything, who died for them, having the indictment against them nailed to His Cross, in which also God openly triumphed over principalities and powers. The true way to spiritual life is not by turning from Him, but by ever clinging more closely to Him, and verily sharing by mystical union in His dying and rising again. By that union alone all evil that afflicts the soul shall cease, shall be put off as a filthy robe; and the graces which truly adorn and bring near to God, shall be put on after the image of Christ. Abiding thus 'in the Lord,' the result will be seen not only in the new and richer life of the Church, but in all the relations of life, pre-eminently in that centre of Christian felicity, the home, among wives and husbands, children and servants.

Finally, with loving commendations of his messenger, and salutations from friends around him in Rome, not only to the Colossians but also to the brethren in Laodicea who are to share in his counsels, the brief but faithful and important letter comes to a close.

Reverting now to the passages which undoubtedly contain the distinctive purpose of the Epistle—those in which Paul makes express reference to the Colossian heresy (ii. 4, 8, and 16–23), and those in which it is

reasonable and almost necessary to assume that that teaching is in his mind (i. 15–20),—we find a double line of treatment, corresponding to the two elements to be traced in the heresy, the one transcendental, and the other practical. The former deals with the pre-existent life of Christ, the origin of the universe, and of the new spiritual creation, the Church; the latter, with the manner in which the redeemed life is to be guided and controlled, its emancipation from mere ceremonial observances, earthly rudiments of religion, and severe and arbitrary austerities of the flesh. In treating these two aspects of things Paul has but one solution, and that is Christ. On the one hand, Christ the Divine Son is at once the origin and goal, the beginning and end of the whole created world, and in Himself fills the entire space between the human and the divine; and on the other hand, in Him redeemed humanity finds its completeness and perfection, in Him the only deliverance from a guilty past, the only hope of a blameless future.

Generally speaking, there is nothing essentially new in this doctrine. The central importance of the Cross, and the mystical union of the believer with the crucified and risen Christ, have been clearly and fully stated in earlier Epistles; and the view of Christ as the Eternal Word, the manifestation of God, the source and goal of all creation, is not only in complete harmony with other apostolic teaching, especially Johannine, but has already, though in less developed form, been enunciated by Paul himself both to the Corinthians and to the Romans.[1]

The main features of the Epistle, therefore, which we ought to grasp, are, first, the supremacy of Christ in His Person and Office, and, secondly, His all-sufficiency in the Christian Life.

1. (1) In two striking phrases Paul describes the unique relation of Christ to God the Father. He is the

[1] Cf. 1 Cor. viii. 6, and xv. 27; 2 Cor. iv. 4; Rom. x. 12, and most probably ix. 5. On this last reference ("Who is over all, God blessed for ever") *vide supra*, p. 251 n.; and for authorities on the interpretation, cf. Stevens' *Pauline Theology*, p. 201 n.

Image of the invisible God, and in Him all the Fulness of the Godhead dwells. Both words, Image (εἰκών) and Fulness (πλήρωμα), as applied to the Logos or personification of the divine energy, were common in the Alexandrian theosophy of Philo, and were doubtless frequently on the lips of the errorists of Colosse. The Apostle, however, applies them to Christ in the most absolute sense. God the Father, by the very infinitude of His glory, dwelleth in light inaccessible, as One whom no man hath seen, neither indeed can see. But there is One who is His Image, not because He is merely like Him, or in some faint way reflects certain of His qualities, but because He is His full and perfect representation, verily revealing Him in the only way He ever can or will be known.

How vain, therefore, to seek to know God along other lines! How needless to approach Him by any sloping stairs of darkness! He is nigh, and may be known directly in Christ. "The Word became flesh, and we beheld His glory." Nay more, to receive spiritual aid or blessing it is unnecessary to repair to any other source. For in Him all the Fulness of the Godhead dwells, that is, He contains the complete sum of all the divine powers and attributes. Omnipotence and omniscience are His, infinite love, pity, and compassion. All the grace and goodness that we conceive when we think of God, reside in Him. How is it possible, then, to kneel in worship before any other? to adore or fear any other? "See the Christ stand": God manifest in the flesh, and thus manifest that there may flow from Him to us, who are flesh of His flesh, every good and perfect gift. This strips the crown from every other head, for it brings One into vision before whom every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord. No other stands to God in such a relation, at once the express Image of His Person, and the living and brimming Fountain of His goodness, not for a moment merely, or for a brief and brilliant earthly ministry, but eternally, abiding and unimpaired, for in Him all the Fulness *dwells*.

(2) Now, if this be Christ's unique relation to God,

does it not follow as a thing most assured that He is supreme over all creation? He is at once its origin and its end. He is the Firstborn of every creature, that is, in existence before them all, and their natural Ruler and Lord.[1] For by Him all things were created, things in heaven and things on earth, visible and invisible, however exalted any of them may seem to be, however noble the parts assigned to them, "thrones or dominions, principalities or powers": they were created through Him, yea and for Him—all to find in Him their destiny; and without Him not one for a single moment subsists, for He is the pre-existing power on which they all depend. How perilous, therefore, is any doctrine which puts that which is created in the place of Him who creates! The universe owes its being to One, and only to One. Every star that shines in the sky, and every flower that blooms on earth, every seraph that stands before the Throne, and every insect that spreads its gauzy wings in the light, in Him live and move and have their being. He called them forth, and because He is almighty they do not faint or fail. For His glory they came into being, for His glory they continue, and, in the consummation, at His feet they shall fall. The voice of angels and of all created things is: "Worship Him."

(3) Still further, there is the new creation, the creation of the redeemed and reconciled, and over this also the same Lord is supreme. "He is Head of the body, the Church." The Church! Believers, called out from the world, under whatever clime, by whatever name they are named, whatever tongue they speak, in Imperial Rome, or in provincial Colosse—are a mysterious unity, sharers in a common life and an eternal hope; and that unity, that

[1] On *πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως* cf. Lightfoot, *Colossians*, p. 144. That the genitive is not partitive is quite evident from the very next sentence, "For by Him," etc. A similar comparative use of the genitive occurs in English in Milton's well-known lines:

> "Adam the goodliest man of men since born
> His sons; the fairest of her daughters Eve."
>
> *Par. Lost*, iv. 323–324.

life, that hope, they all owe to Christ. As the head is to the body, truly regarded as the *sine quâ non* of its existence, without which it decays and ceases to be, the nervous centre of its thought and feeling, the source of its strength, the spring and guide of its activity—so is Christ to the Church. In Him it begins, not in any transcendent sphere, but in the realm of history and experience, inasmuch as He first rose from the dead, in order that, living and ascended, He might lead many sons unto glory. Yea, it is not the body of believing men alone who are thus blessed in Him. The peace "through the blood of the Cross" runs as a whisper of divine love through the whole universe. By the Christ of Calvary it pleases God "to reconcile all things unto Himself, things on earth and things in heaven."[1] The whole creation that has so long travailed and been in pain, shall be blest in this *Pax Dei*, and even the angelic beings—may we not conceive it?—dismayed by the awful prevalence and dominion of sin, and bewildered by the divine attitudes and movements towards it, by the long-suffering of God and the condescension of divine self-sacrifice, shall be drawn in a blessed access of rapturous adoration nearer to the God of redeeming love, and at last understanding what they long desired to look into, shall praise Him through infinity in the Song of the Lamb. How humbly it becomes us, therefore, to abase ourselves before a supremacy so absolute and so dearly won! The man who thinks he is a Christian, and yet even for a moment suffers any other than Christ to usurp the throne of his deepest affections, to dictate or control his actions, does not understand. He is severing himself from what alone supplies true dignity and worth to his life. He should rather be jealous of every voice that drowns the

[1] Col. i. 19–20. Dr. Charles, in his Jowett Lectures on *Eschatology*, pp. 404–405, strongly maintains that Paul means both in Colossians and Ephesians to teach that the fallen angels must share in the atonement of the Cross. He thinks the word "reconciliation" incapable of any other interpretation. But cf. on the contrary Weiss, *Bib. Theol.*, ii. 106–107 and note. Cf. also Denney (*Death of Christ*, pp. 194–200), who finds the scope of the reconciliation due to the cosmical view of Christ's Person, and declines to lay stress on ideas that are at best "quasi-poetical."

voice of Christ, eager to flee from every hand that would loose the cords that bind him to so great and dear a Lord. Without Him new life had never begun to be, and without Him it can never be made perfect. In all things He must "have the pre-eminence."

In such a way, by such magnificent and comprehensive conceptions, Paul strove to meet the dangers that beset the Church at Colosse. Christ first, Christ last, Christ all the way through, in the universe and in the Church, was a faith so great that no atom of room was left for a desire to people the unseen with visionary hosts of angelic powers, helpful or hateful, to whom it were needful to pay any tribute of adoration or fear. They faded away like pale ghosts before the glorious dawn of this heavenly Sun.

The true antidote to the haunting and perilous myths was simply to understand Christ better. The Colossians revered Him for much, but not for nearly enough. They did not perceive how the 'much' really implied infinitely more. The Apostle ventures with them into the invisible world. But he has a great advantage over them, and the consciousness of it makes him radiant. What were their doctrines after all? They were almost entirely imaginary, and all the angelic beings whom they presented as the agents of God and authorities over men, were, even granting that they existed, unknown by any definite knowledge or experience. It was vain to arrange them in ranks, and to whisper their names in initiated circles. No man knew such things. But the Apostle found, pervading and dominating the whole created world, One who once trod the earth in human form, and who in sight of human eyes had ascended into heaven, whence He had revealed Himself as dwelling in power and glory. For this belief, therefore, he had an historic basis of a nature that made all he had to say of the supremacy of Christ inherently probable. Of One who was confessedly God manifest in the flesh, who triumphed, as they all believed, so wonderfully on the Cross, and who was now exalted as a Prince and a Saviour at the right hand of God, surely it was utterly impossible to

believe that His absolute beginning was as a babe in Bethlehem, or even that it was adequate to give Him a vague and limited place among the angels. What they knew of Him demanded far more than that, no less than a pre-existent state of ineffable glory.[1] Let them enter, therefore, the transcendental sphere if they will, but let them find there, as reason itself compels them to find, One who when on earth delighted in the sons of men, but who Himself was the delight of the Father before the world began.

2. But the false teaching was not without a direct bearing on conduct. It might be but the baseless fabric of a vision, yet all who were enticed to entertain it were also led to adopt on its account very rigorous rules of practical life. Creed and conduct go hand in hand whatever the creed may be; and Paul learnt that the creed of Colosse, as he might have guessed, was resulting in the old relapse he had so often striven against, an enslaved life that returned to tremble beneath the Law, and that sought to make itself perfect through the flesh.

The cult of the angels as exhibited in Paul's time, may be said to have had a twofold reason for its existence. It had vogue, partly because men desired to account for the existence of evil, and partly because they desired to escape from it. The theory of angelic emanations, proceeding from God in an almost endless series towards materialisation, accounted for its existence, and was an outcome of a revival of Platonic dualism, according to which the seat of all evil was believed to be in material things: and the escape was to be by the cultivation of the spiritual mediating powers that were deemed friendly to man, and by punctilious and humble servitude towards those that were antagonistic. Hence the Law "given by angels" must continue to be fulfilled, and the physical relations which, as essentially evil, degraded the soul and held it in bondage, must be overcome and contemned. That is to say, the practical

[1] On this "inference backward" cf. Weiss, *Bib. Theol. of the N.T.*, i. 413–414.

result was the endeavour to achieve a sanctified life by the impossible routes of legalism and asceticism.

Against these resultant errors Paul warned with all his strength. They were both due to the serious misunderstanding of Christ: the one forgetting that He had for ever abolished the servitude of the Law by His Cross; the other, that the only true way to a higher life was by continuing in union with Him who had risen to the right hand of God. The Law indeed was 'good,' but it was no longer a standard of judgment for those for whom the bond of ordinances had been nailed to the Cross. Its ritual once served to point to Christ, but was not binding now that the substance to which it pointed had come. Any 'powers' who sought to press it as a perpetual and unendurable yoke, had been divinely spoiled and made a show of openly. The starting-point of the new life was the end of the old.

As for ascetic discipline of the body, they must never dream that merely to despise the body was a sure way to escape from the temptations and corruptions of which it seemed the channel. Experience only too sadly shows that hard treatment of the body is no real remedy for the passions of the soul. Penance and self-humiliation have a "show of wisdom," and they deceive many; but they have never proved a specific against the indulgence of the flesh.[1] Christian history has assuredly echoed back the warning word. The hermits in their cells, and the monks in their monasteries; St. Francis contemning his 'brother the ass,'[2] tightening his girdle about him till he bled, and rolling himself in the pitiless snow on the recurrence of what he deemed an evil desire: none of them by self-inflicted stripes found deliverance from this 'body of death.' Paul's solution is now as ever wholly spiritual. He knows that it is a profound mistake to identify sin with external things. Its seat is in the inner life and will: "the heart aye's the part aye that makes us right or wrang." Hence

[1] "Not really of any value to remedy indulgence of the flesh"; this seems the meaning at the close of ver. 23. Cf. Lightfoot, *Colossians*, p. 204.

[2] *I.e.*, his body.

the inward change, the new heart, alone avails. And this is secured only in one way, "in the Lord"; by so intimate a union with Christ that the believer spiritually dies Christ's death, and lives Christ's life. The sole secret of sanctification is that "Christ is our life," and that henceforth it is not we who live but Christ who liveth in us. It is by the daily dwelling in Him and He in us, whereby His will becomes ours, and His strength ours, that the new man is put on "after the image of Him that created him," and that the daily transfiguration takes place which alone makes human life sublime.

It is impossible to turn from this short Epistle without feeling that though it deals with "unhappy far-off things, and battles long ago," it yet touches tendencies and errors that are ever prone to show themselves in the human heart. Among Christians it should be ever precious for the lofty ideas it gives of the pre-eminent glory of Christ. No higher place can ever be given to Him by the human mind than is given to Him here. He stands behind all created things! The revelations of Science, therefore, only shed new rays of glory upon Him, and the march of history and the experiences of providence obtain a marvellous security, and have round them a fresh halo of righteousness and tenderness, when we cling to the faith that He is at the centre, and that One who has stood so close to our humanity, and who knows it to its profoundest depths, holds the control in His pierced hands, and makes all things work together for good to them that love Him. He fills the whole space which the human heart so often yearns to bridge, the awful gulf that lies between God and fallen man. He is the fellow and the friend of both. To know Him is to know that there is no need of other mediation, that merely to think of it is to put a slur upon a divine sufficiency, and to deny that our Lord's power and sympathy, His divinity and humanity, are as real as we have confessed. Saints and angels, whatever their place in His great universe, are not and can never be mediators between our souls and God. We have drifted far from the apostolic faith if we ever dream so vain a dream. And we

are equally astray if we turn to rest in the mere ritual and ceremonial exercises of religion, as if these in themselves had any propitiatory or reconciling force. Very acutely has it been remarked: "The letter to the Colossians was sent from Rome. Would it not be well to send it back to its cradle?"[1] We must joyfully continue to hold, alike for the Church which is sometimes tempted to lean upon another arm, and for the individual Christian who seeks refuge beneath other wings, that the heartmost message of the Epistle abides: "Ye are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power."

[1] Godet, *Studies on the Epistles*, p. 191.

# THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

## I.

## THE EPISTLE AND ITS PURPOSE.

If we sought to show the secret of Paul's success as a missionary, we should certainly turn to this brief Epistle in preference almost to any other. For that secret did not lie so much in his masterly generalship of the Churches, or in his great ability in the statement and defence of the gospel, as in his devoted love to individual souls. It was by his affectionate personal interest that he undoubtedly obtained his singular hold upon men. Wherever he went hearts responded to this winsome attachment. The sunshine of his solicitude seemed to focus itself on each single life, and to make that life its peculiar care. Great as he is when panoplied in theological armour, "sheathed with logic and bristling with arguments," he is greater still as he lavishes himself in the personal ministry of love, and seeks to win his crown in the growing grace and peace of the souls whom he has brought into the kingdom of Christ.

We might indeed have gathered so much from allusions in other Epistles, but this one makes it particularly vivid, and indeed presents us with a quite unique picture of the Apostle in all the charm of his intimate intercourse with his friends. Moreover, it is the only Pauline we possess of so very personal a nature. We can scarcely doubt that as his messengers went to and fro they must frequently have borne such notes of kindly counsel. Yet there has been

preserved only this gem. Every one recognises that it shines with a rare lustre. Renan speaks of it as a *chef-d'œuvre* in letter-writing, although it is really too artless and natural to suggest the *atelier*. It is characterised by the most charming courtesy and tact, but only as the expression of innate delicacy and good-feeling. It may indeed be said to have disarmed criticism, for few have cared to lay a rough hand upon it. Its authenticity has hardly been seriously questioned. Baur rejected it, but amid compliments and with an air of apology. He could only suggest that it was an "embryo Christian romance." Weizsäcker and Pfleiderer prefer to speak of it as an "allegory." But these writers scarcely deal with it on its own merits. *Noscitur e sociis* is for the moment their critical maxim. For Philemon is so closely linked with Colossians, and gives that difficult Epistle such invincible support, that it is felt to be quite impossible to admit it. It must go simply because Colossians must. As Sabatier says, we have here the wolf's argument against the lamb: "If it was not you, it was your brother." Yet Paul's impress is all over the letter, in every sentiment and syllable, and we may conclude that he never wrote anything if he did not write this. "Nothing," said Erasmus, "could be more perfectly Pauline." "It can only be set aside," adds Sabatier, "by an act of sheer violence."

Paul's purpose in this Epistle is a very transparent and yet a very delicate one. It is to reconcile a master to his slave. Onesimus had abused his trust in Philemon's household, and had fled from his service. Paul, however, had now brought this fugitive slave into the faith of Christ, and had conceived for him a deep affection. Both master and slave were his friends; both owed him life in Christ Jesus; and he felt he might bridge the gulf between them by an appeal to that Lord in whom there is neither bond nor free.

The Epistle is not, strictly speaking, private. The address is to Philemon, to Apphia and Archippus, and to the congregation of Christians who meet in Philemon's house. Yet the matter is one in which Philemon is chiefly

concerned, and the body of the Epistle is definitely written to him. We ought not, however, to regard the inclusion of the brethren in the address as a matter of small significance. It is no doubt an act of kindly remembrance, but it is something more. Had it been no more, we should have found these friends mentioned simply in the greetings at the close. It seems certainly implied that though Philemon is sole legal arbiter in the matter, the appeal to be made to him is one of such a distinctly Christian character that not he alone but also the Christians around him, and especially they of his own house, are to be regarded as deeply interested. The new religious relation in which they all stand has its obligations. There is thus a delicate but unmistakable influence brought to bear on the Christian master at the very start. He cannot escape the consciousness that however he may act, he will act as a member of a spiritual association, whose bonds are the bonds of grace and peace. Undoubtedly also Paul must have felt that what he was about to say should have more than a mere individual effect. He dealt with what was a common experience in Christian homes. His words would do very valuable service if they tended to alleviate the general social condition, and to lead to kindlier relations between master and slave in more cases than one.

Philemon seems to have been a man of wealth and position in the town of Colosse. He was distinguished for his benevolence, and had thrown open his house as a meeting-place for the Christian converts. He himself had been brought to Christ by the Apostle's influence, probably when Paul was at work in Ephesus. It is generally believed that Apphia was his wife, and Archippus their son. From a passage in Colossians it is also inferred that Archippus was an office-bearer in the neighbouring Church of Laodicea.

Onesimus was most likely only one of many slaves in this household. His name—'profitable'—was a very common one for a slave to bear. But he had not been true to his name, as Paul indicates by his good-humoured play on the word (ver. 11). He had apparently defrauded

his master (vv. 18–19), and we may also judge that his case was a bad one, if not in the actual amount of the dishonesty, which Paul pledges himself to repay, at any rate in its accompanying circumstances. A mere case of petty pilfering, an incident so common that 'thief' and 'slave' were almost synonymous terms, would never have compelled him to take a step which would itself have brought on him an extreme penalty.[1] Nor would he have been likely to flee for a small offence from a master whose clemency and benevolence were well known. The dread that inspired him was probably a moral one. He may have stood on terms of high esteem with his master, and enjoyed his confidence. The Epistle shows that there was much that was attractive about him, and that his nature was one of earnestness and depth. It is quite possible, therefore, that the impulse that drove him away was rather shame than fear. Slaves were often as cultured and sensitive as their owners, and if Onesimus had fallen from his high place on some sudden temptation, we need not wonder if he felt too much ashamed to face Philemon. At all events he fled from Colosse, and with the true instinct of a fugitive he made for the covert of a great city. It was easier to lose himself amid Rome's teeming population than anywhere else in the world. He wished the waves to go over him, that he might be unrecognised, unheeded, and forgotten.

It is on the whole too far-fetched to imagine that Onesimus expected to find in Rome salvation either spiritual or civil. It has been thought that he knew of Paul's imprisonment, and that he definitely went to seek the Apostle. It is very possible he may have seen Paul in

[1] Runaway slaves when retaken were usually branded on the forehead, or maimed, or forced to fight with wild beasts. They were pursued by hue and cry; bills were circulated with their description, and with offers of reward for their restoration; and there was a regular professional class (*fugitivarii*) employed to hunt them down. There were also insurance offices that insured the master against loss incurred by the flight of his slaves. Cf. Smith's *Dict. of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, *s.v.* Servus, p. 868*a*. Also Blair's *Inquiry into the State of Slavery amongst the Romans*, p. 109; and Boeckh's *Public Economy of Athens*, i. 100.

Ephesus, and may have heard him proclaim the liberty wherewith Christ makes men free. But it is not likely that that memory now inspired him to cast himself on Paul's sympathy. Had he interpreted Christianity so profoundly, he would never have left his Christian master. More probably it never entered his dreams that the Apostle's language pointed to a loosening of the bonds of his literal slavery. And if he knew Paul was a friend of Philemon, to meet him would be the last thing he would desire.

But the great world is not so very large, and the most unexpected meetings often take place when all the so-called chances are against them. In some way quite unknown to us, God's providence caused Onesimus to be met and recognised in those busy streets. The eye of the Lord was on His wandering sheep. Even when he thought himself most concealed, Onesimus was most observed. Fleeing from the earthly master, he ran into the arms of the heavenly. Little do we know the issues to which our steps are leading, or the strange turnings that will surprise us in the lanes of life. Out of our very sins and follies it pleases God to unfold the opportunities of grace. Sometimes we refuse them, and the hand of the Good Shepherd is shaken off in misunderstanding and disdain. But Onesimus did not so refuse. Perhaps he had been long enough at the black heart of that iniquitous city, and had tasted sufficient of its wretchedness and horror. His soul grew lean on the husks with which he was fed. When a friend came in his way, and when that friend brought with him the air of a better and purer life, he did not turn from him. There was something that inclined to good in the heart of the runaway. Let us suppose it was Epaphras of Colosse whom he met. He was not sorry. The thought of the fair homeland valley, with its gleaming streams and sheltering hills, leapt up in his homesick heart at the sight of that known face. He was willing to go with him; and so Epaphras brought him to Paul, and Paul brought him to Christ. It is the story that has repeated itself so often in the long history

of the gospel. The unhappy and forlorn wanderer finds a friend on the world's highway, and the face of the friend fades into the face of Christ.

Paul brought Onesimus far on into the kingdom of light, and his heart went out to him with special fulness. There was no barrier between them. The divine love that had begun to renew the face of the earth bore every barrier down. And there was much that was worthy of love in this man who had sinned and repented. When the deep chords were touched there was music in his life also. He was faithful and devoted, 'profitable' now in the transformation of grace. His gratitude flowed back on the Apostle like a river. He became so welcome that to part with him, Paul declared, was like parting with his own heart.

Yet to part with him was right. Paul dared not absorb this goodness and service. Philemon had a prior claim. The Apostle saw this clearly, and he made Onesimus see it also. Both were agreed that in the Christian view there was only one thing possible, and that was that reparation should be made for the wrong which had been done, and that the freedman of Christ should not go through the world branded as an unpardoned fugitive. Paul did not anticipate that the return would be so painful as Onesimus probably feared. He had little doubt of the issue. It is true that even the best of men are sometimes inclined to be sceptical of a sudden profession of faith, when it is employed as an argument for secular advantage. But the Apostle knew Philemon, and knew that the Christian appeal would not be made to him in vain. When Tychicus went to Colosse, Onesimus would go under his wing. Tychicus would not only speak for him, he would bear this letter of reconciliation from Paul's own hand. It would relate how highly the Apostle thought both of master and of slave, and how inexpressibly dear they both were. It would recall Philemon's already noble record, and gently remind him that *noblesse oblige*. If it spoke of debt, it would hint at a still greater debt that Philemon himself owed—even his own soul. It would say, too, that Paul hoped soon to visit Colosse, implying

what joy it would be to him to see a happy issue with his own eyes. It would ask the master to do graciously, and it would even express confidence that he would be likely to do more than it ventured to ask. And what would that be? Surely to bestow that 'liberty' which the Apostle valued so highly, and which he had already told Christian slaves was—though not indispensable to their goodness—a gift to be welcomed.[1] "Not without reason," says Zahn, "is ver. 21 interpreted of emancipation." The word emancipation is not uttered, says Lightfoot, but "it seems to be trembling on the lips."

So the letter was written; very brief, but very precious. We are not informed of its effect, but we need not doubt it. If Paul ever visited the fair valley of the Lycus in happier days, we may well believe he had cause to rejoice in both his friends. Legend grew busy with the names of the slave and his master. Philemon, men said, became bishop of Colosse, and won the martyr's crown at Rome. But no faith can be put in these traditions. Similarly with Onesimus; he became bishop of Ephesus or Berea, preached in Spain, perished at Puteoli. Yet the veil of history really falls over him when this Epistle closes. The redeemed slave is sent on his way with a great earthly and heavenly hope, and that is all we know.

As for the Epistle itself, there was a time when men spoke of it slightingly, and passed it over with scant regard. They thought it concerned with a small matter, unedifying, and unworthy of a place in the Bible. That was chiefly in the fourth century when theologians were engaged in fierce battles of creeds and councils, and found no ammunition for their strife in its kindly words. Other ages have seen it with other eyes, and have exalted it to a high place in Christian esteem. Strange to say, classical antiquity has left an Epistle strikingly similar to this, and one with which it has often been compared.

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 21. The meaning of this verse is much disputed by interpreters. But that here adopted appears not only legitimate, but the one most entitled to acceptance.

Pliny the Younger was a distinguished letter-writer, although he wrote with the public in his eye, and one of his Epistles, like this of Paul's, is addressed to a friend, and pleads for a slave. It is very polished and elegant, as became the production of the paragon of his age. It is full also of touching and noble sentiments.[1] Nevertheless, it is excelled by Paul's Epistle. In gracefulness of diction it could not indeed be expected to fall behind; but in depth and delicacy of feeling, in the fine ring of genuine sympathy, in the total unconsciousness of superiority or of speaking from any higher level, above all in the profounder motives of appeal, the balance is very clearly on the side of him who had learnt in the school of Christ.

But it is not for its literary value that the Epistle is so precious. It is the intrinsic worth of its message, and the far-reaching effect of its principles, which render it priceless. That Onesimus should have been willing to venture back to Philemon, and that Philemon, as we may assume from Paul's confidence, should have been willing to receive him, are in themselves a striking instance of the reality of the influence of the gospel. Any one who knows what the relations between master and slave were in that old Græco-Roman world, knows how little likely, in an ordinary case, the one would be to expect forgiveness, or the other to grant it. But even if by nature Philemon were a kindly man, and Onesimus a faithful servant, it is on higher grounds that their reconciliation proceeds. "Not as a slave," says Paul, "but above a slave, a brother beloved." Reconciliation was to take place because each now stood in an entirely new relation to the other. They were master and servant still, but they were more. There was a kinship between them that was spiritual and eternal. It was not merely that the blood of both was red and human, but that both were one in the hidden life of Christ. By as much as they cherished that life, by so

[1] Pliny's letter is quoted at length by Lightfoot, *Colossians and Philemon*, pp. 316–317, and by many of the commentators. See also Firth's tr. (Scott Library), ii. 182.

much must they cherish each other. Should the one now fear to return, and the other only seek revenge, they would deny the faith. The power of Christ is thus glorified in them equally. It has begun, as no other power on earth ever attempted, to bind together, not by constraint but by love, the most diverse sections of society, those that by rank are farthest apart, and whose interests have not hitherto been regarded as the same.

The Epistle is thus of great significance, and plays an important part in discussions regarding the social influence of the Christian religion. It gets to the very bottom of class relations and distinctions, and reveals a universal unifying principle such as men look for elsewhere in vain. "The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord is the Maker of them all"—but Maker now in a unique and specific sense, higher and nobler than any that the man who first wrote these words could conceive. Very specially has the Epistle figured in controversy on the subject of slavery. It has been confidently appealed to on both sides, for sanction and for abolition. It has also raised a question that lies behind this, bearing on the nature of Bible revelation. It is therefore of importance to understand how it relates itself to this matter. One indeed may feel of slavery as Carlyle felt of the Corn Laws: "Here," he said, "we have no chapter on the Corn Laws; the Corn Laws are too mad to have a chapter." But the attitude of Christianity has been too much misunderstood, and its influence too frequently misrepresented or denied, to permit the subject to be passed over.

## II.

## SLAVERY IN ANCIENT AND MODERN TIMES.

The essence of slavery lies in the complete subjection of the slave to the will of his master. The master possesses him absolutely to use or dispose of. Law, conscience, custom, the feelings of religion, common humanity, love or

fear, may step in to modify the relation, but in its literal significance slavery is the claim of one man to treat another as a piece of property. The term, however, is often used when the absolute sense is not quite intended, and even when 'rights' of a more or less definite kind have been conceded to the bondsman.[1]

The custom has been variously accounted for. The most radical opinion is that it arises from a fundamental distinction between men. Some are born to be free, and some are born slaves. This is the well-known view which Aristotle defends in the early chapters of his First Book on *Politics*. "It is evident," he says, "that some persons are slaves and others freemen by the appointment of nature." "Whoever, therefore, are as much inferior to their fellows as the body is to the soul, or the brutes to men, these, I say, are slaves by nature. . . . He then is by nature formed a slave, who is fitted to become the chattel of another person, and on that account is so." Slavery by conquest or by law he repudiates as an injustice and a degradation; for it might happen to men of the nobler birth, and those who are thus enslaved are not really slaves, and should not be called so. The real slaves by nature, and those properly so styled, are the 'barbarians,' that is, all who are not Greeks. For Aristotle quotes the poets with satisfaction:

"'Tis meet that barbarous tribes to Greeks should bow."

The essential fallacy of this distinction has, of course, been abundantly proved by history, for the very races

[1] It is interesting to note the derivation of the word 'slave.' It comes directly from the name of a people, the Slavs, who were often brought under bondage by their Teutonic neighbours, but the Slavs themselves, it is believed, took this name from a proud word, *slava*, meaning 'glory.' Such is the opinion of many scholars, including Gibbon, who traces the degradation of the name, "by chance or malice," to the eighth century, in the Oriental France, where the Princes and Bishops were rich in Slavonian captives. Smith's *Gibbon*, vii. ch. lv. p. 66 n. Others, however, have, since Gibbon's day, preferred to derive the Slav national name from a word, *slovane*, 'speaking men,' in contrast to *niemetz*, 'dumb men,' which in modern Slavonic is simply equivalent to 'German.' Cf. Smith's note to *Gibbon*, v. 168; or *Ency. Brit.*, *s.v.* Slavs, xxii. 146[a].

Aristotle would have classed by nature as 'barbarians and slaves' are now leading the van of the civilised world. Apart from that, however, we must not regard him, because of his principle, as destitute of humane considerations. On the contrary, we find him laying down several excellent rules for the guidance of masters in the treatment of slaves, and in his *Economics* he urges that the prospect of liberation should be held out to them as a reward of good behaviour. Although the Greeks generally agreed with Aristotle that slavery was necessary for the existence of the State and of the family, and that the case for it was self-evident, yet many of them did not follow him in his theory of origin. The Romans on their part differed from it entirely. Roman philosophers did not indeed trouble themselves much with the abstract question, but when they did, it was to declare that liberty is the natural state of mankind, and that slavery has no foundation in nature; that it is merely an institution of society, a creation of the civil law. Modern times, however, have witnessed a recurrence to the Aristotelian view in its frankest form. In the fierce discussions that preceded the American Civil War, the champions of negro slavery boldly asserted the inherent distinction of race. In the pulpit, on the platform, and in the statute-book, the negro was defined in Aristotle's very phrase as a "chattel personal." He was but a "living instrument," differing only from the ox or the horse in having the faculty of reason. "If there are sordid, servile, and laborious offices to be performed," said one leader of opinion, "is it not better that there should be sordid, servile, and laborious beings to perform them?"[1] The negro, it was commonly said, "is created on a lower plane than the white." "The defence of slavery in the popular mind," said Emerson, "was the inferiority of race."[2] The curse upon Canaan was regarded as still lying upon his descendants, and it

[1] Chancellor Harper before the South Carolina Institute: cit. Goldwin Smith, *Does the Bible Sanction American Slavery?* p. 116.

[2] Cabot's *Memoir of Emerson*, ii. 49.

could not be wrong, not merely to recognise the curse, but even to give pious aid in fulfilling it.

It ought not to be difficult, however, to reach saner views on the matter. It is a very intelligible and reasonable opinion, and one in harmony with our knowledge of human nature, that the custom of servitude arose naturally under the most primitive form of family and tribal government. Its origin lay in the demand of the head of the family for the service of others, and, if need were, in its enforcement. Those who were not of the blood, but who were added to the family or the tribe by subjection or for the sake of maintenance, naturally became servants. The origin of slavery, as Goldwin Smith puts it, "lies enfolded in the patriarch's tent." The matter has also been well stated by Becker: "The root of slavery lies everywhere, and must be rather sought in the general disinclination to menial labour, and that abhorrence of servitude, based on false notions of liberty, which first made the possession of slaves desirable. In process of time this grew into an imperious necessity, which refused to take into consideration the justice or injustice of the case." [1]

This demand soon created for itself many sources of supply. The first and most obvious was conquest. Those who were spared by the weapons of war, were dragged into pitiless captivity, only a stage better than the cannibalism which in many cases would have been the alternative method of their disposal. Then arose the traffic in slaves, which attained great dimensions in the ancient world. Sometimes free men sold themselves or their children for the sake of gain; but far oftener the markets were stocked by raids on homesteads and villages, and by systematic processes of kidnapping, which made life in certain parts of the world a perpetual terror. The dread of capture, it has been said, hung like the sword of Damocles over all heads. The fairer the captive, or the more educated and refined, the higher the price. Beautiful women, and talented or skilful men, writers, actors, and physicians, were the most

[1] *Charicles*, Excursus to Scene vii. : The Slaves.

valuable.[1] The trade was considered disgraceful, and unworthy of an honourable citizen, nevertheless many took part in it for the sake of the huge fortunes it enabled them to amass. The children of slaves also helped to increase the ranks of the class into which they were born; while in many cases bondage was a feature of religious persecution, as well as the frequent penalty of debt and crime.[2]

In the Roman Empire, in the early part of the Christian era, the slave population far outnumbered the free. In Attica the proportion is moderately stated as three or four to one; and in Rome it was probably not much less. According to Gibbon, the population of the Empire under Claudius was one hundred and twenty millions, of whom half were bondsmen.[3] Many slaves were held for the sake of profit, and many more merely to minister to the domestic wants and luxurious indulgence of their masters. The first feature was more characteristic of Greek slavery, the second of Roman; on the whole also the Greeks were the more kind and indulgent to their slaves, while the Romans offered them greater facilities of obtaining freedom. Both thoroughly exploited them, however, for the sake of revenue, training and hiring them, and trading with the products of their industry and skill. In spite of the odium attaching to commerce in their persons, many of the noblest families engaged in it, and it is said that even the immaculate Cato was a member of a slave-trading firm under an assumed name.[4] As it was considered a degradation for a freeman to work, nearly all trades, arts, crafts, and professions, were in the hands of slaves. Apart from the swarms of merely labouring and domestic slaves, architects, painters, sculptors, actors, musicians, poets, physicians, surgeons, secretaries,

[1] On the market-price of slaves, cf. Boeckh, *Public Economy of Athens*, i. 92 sq.

[2] Cf. Blair's *Inquiry*, ch. ii.

[3] The computation, however, is much disputed. Cf. Blair, ch. i. and notes; also Boeckh, i. 52–53.

[4] Döllinger, *Gentile and Jew*, ii. 261.

some of them very highly accomplished, were of the servile class.[1] Yet slaves practically possessed no rights, and were not deemed persons in the eye of the law. Their testimony was only taken in court under torture, and professional torturers, who were adepts in the most ingenious forms of cruelty, were employed for the purpose. The power of the owner was virtually absolute, to sell or to slay, and the slaves were counted "pro nullis, pro mortuis, pro quadrupedibus."[2] It was to illustrate this arbitrary despotism that Juvenal put the famous words into the mouth of a haughty dame who ordered the death of an innocent slave:

"Hoc volo, sic jubeo, sit pro ratione voluntas."[3]

Long after the Empire became converted to Christianity the institution of slavery remained a part of the constitution of the State. No man dreamt of abolishing it, though many strove to amend it. The progress of the Christian centuries is marked, however, by a gradual change in the absolutism of servitude, and when mediæval times are reached the relation is so greatly modified that it requires to be described by a distinct name. This middle period of modification was still one of bondage, but it was the bondage of serfdom rather than of slavery proper. It is a very difficult task to mark the transition from slavery to serfdom, and to point out how it was accomplished.

In the later days of the Empire there was an institution whose exact origin is wrapped in complete obscurity, but which must have had a marked effect as constituting a well-defined middle status between the slave and the free. This was the class called *coloni*, persons attached to the

[1] Cf. Guhl and Koner, *Life of the Greeks and Romans*, pp. 511–512. Blair, *Inquiry*, pp. 131–141, makes an interesting classification of Roman slaves. He enumerates more than 250 varieties. As to the Greeks, cf. also Boeckh, i. 53.

[2] Babington, Hulsean Lectures on *Christianity and European Slavery*, p. 11.

[3] *Sat.* vi. 223.

soil, and not capable of being alienated from it, either by their own act or by that of the *patronus*. They were called *servi terræ* and *ascripti glebæ*, and they and the estate always passed together. They paid a fixed rent for the land on which they lived, and the fact that they were liable to the poll-tax made them of financial interest to the State as well as to the owner of the land. It was further thought that their inalienable attachment to the soil was an arrangement highly favourable to agriculture. They had a right to retain as their own, though not quite absolutely, whatever they made out of their holdings beyond the rent, and above all, in marked distinction from the slave, they had all the family rights of freemen. Frequent reference is made to them under the Emperors of the fourth century, and in the Codes of Theodosius and Justinian, and although it may not be possible to establish any direct historical relation between them and the serfs, the analogies of their condition are very striking. As to their origin, Dr. Kells Ingram writes: "The class of coloni appears to have been composed partly of tenants by contract who had incurred large arrears of rent and were detained on the estates as debtors (obærati), partly of foreign captives or immigrants who were settled in this condition on the land, and partly of small proprietors and other poor men who voluntarily adopted the status as an improvement in their position."[1]

In many of the mediæval European countries the serfs were no doubt largely composed of the humbler classes of the original but now subjugated inhabitants. Many of them were simply poor freemen who, as the importation of slaves fell away, took their places in servitude, and bartered liberty for the prospect of food and protection. Famine and failure, debt and distress of various kinds, continually augmented the multitude who were driven into a state of dependence; and not infrequently the rapacity

[1] Article on Slavery in the *Ency. Brit.* xxii. 135 sq. Cf. also Sandars, *Institutes of Justinian*, pp. 96–97; and the article in Smith's *Dict. of Greek and Roman Antiqq.*, *s.v.* Prædium, based on the researches of Savigny.

of powerful lords made an easy prey of a weak and impoverished peasantry. The bondage of the serfs descended by heredity to their children. Its characteristic feature, however, was that, like the Helots of Sparta, the serfs were attached to the land, and belonged rather to the estate than to the master. Custom and law varied greatly in different countries and ages, although on the whole it may be said that the serfs had a much better position than the slaves. Their human nature was recognised and respected, and it was rather their labour and its products that were the property of the master than their persons. The important point is, that though this feudal relation was servile and often miserable in a high degree, it was essentially an advance on slavery. The serfs had certain civil rights, and there was a gradual approximation in their case to free labour. Serfdom was in fact a transition state, and had in it elements which inevitably worked in the direction of complete personal freedom. In the large centres of population the serf tended to become a free labourer, and in the rural districts to become a free tenant. Many causes contributed to this issue, which was slowly but surely reached in one Christian country after another. By the beginning of the fourteenth century the emancipation of the serf was practically accomplished in France; in England serfdom disappeared more slowly, and not so much by definite legislation as by a lingering and natural process; in Scotland its extinction was not thoroughly accomplished until the close of the eighteenth century; in Germany it was finally abolished by the middle of the nineteenth; and in Russia, in 1861, the edict of Alexander II. gave freedom to no fewer than forty millions of serfs.

But as the servile relation, in its second and modified phase, was slowly dying out in Europe, the history of the Christian era unhappily presents a recrudescence of slavery in its most virulent form. The settlers in the colonies of the New World found the Indian unfitted for the hard work of the plantations, and the negro was accordingly imported to take his place. Thus in the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries, under the Christian banners of Spain and Portugal and England, began the long black story of African wrong at the white man's hand. It has been one of the darkest crimes in modern history, and fruitful of untold evil. The struggle against it began in earnest towards the close of the eighteenth century, and was crowned with success in the early part of the nineteenth. It sounds strange in our ears that negro slavery was ever boldly defended as an advance in civilisation, a system that gave the master leisure "to improve his mind," and that vindicated its claim to the approbation of an enlightened humanity. The "advance" that flogged women, and measured the punishment by the time it took the master leisurely to smoke out his pipe, does not strike one as very conspicuous. The traffic was first stopped by Denmark, and then by Great Britain, the United States, and France. In abolition Great Britain led the way in her West Indian Colonies, and other European Powers followed more or less completely. America, in 1862–1865, achieved emancipation only by a tragic outpouring of blood and treasure. Here and there, in distant isles of the sea, in various forms and under various disguises, enslavement still refuses utterly to perish, but it may be said, perhaps not too rashly, that the civilised Christian world virtually with one voice condemns it, and that, wherever Christianity dominates, the curtain has been rung down on it for ever.

## III.

## CAUSES OF THE MITIGATION AND ABOLITION OF SLAVERY.

The causes operating in Christian times in favour of the modification and ultimate extinction of slavery were undoubtedly very complex. The simpler we seem to find them, the farther shall we be from the truth, and any attempt to reduce them to one, and to call it Christianity,

will be quite impossible. In the social changes of the long centuries, war, pestilence, and famine have played their part; so also have peace, the feudal relations, the revival of industry and learning, the experience of the impolicy and false economy of slave labour; but, chiefest of all, the growth of humane feelings, the truer perception of the inherent rights of man, and the leavening influence of the Christian religion. It will suffice briefly to refer to the more important causes under these four categories, political, economic, moral, and religious.

1. Undoubtedly it was the concern of government to endeavour wisely to control a system which was so vital a part of the body politic. The enormous size of the slave population, and its frequently threatening attitude, were bound to occupy the gravest attention of the legislature. Of all disturbances in the political world, servile insurrection was to be most dreaded.[1] The safeguards taken were very often repressive, but at times it was deemed wiser to relax the severity of the bondage, to reconcile the slave to his position, and as far as possible to eradicate from his bosom the rankling sense of injustice. Hence, before the time of Constantine, we have many edicts tending to relieve the situation; and while a growing humanity, and a concern for the development of industry after the period of imperial conquest was over, have no doubt to be recognised in these edicts, political considerations were also operative in a high degree. Even the amusements and pleasures of the slaves were matter of public concern. Ambitious men were also known to free their slaves in large numbers for the purpose of swelling their political *clientèle*. In the age of serfdom the political motive very clearly led to the mitigation of the bondsman's lot. Kings and rulers frequently threw over him the ægis of their protection, and increased his privileges, not so much for his own sake, as to check the ambition and curb the powers of the barons.

[1] On the conspiracies and outbreaks of the servile classes, cf. Blair, *Inquiry*, pp. 201–202; G. Smith, *Does the Bible*, etc., p. 85; and Brace, *Gesta Christi*, pp. 232 sqq.

Even in American emancipation the political element played no small part. It was a watchword of Lincoln's, "A house divided against itself cannot stand: The country must either be all bond or all free." That is to say, abolition was felt to be essential to the political union of the States.

2. Nor can it be denied that economic reasons operated powerfully to reconcile men to departure from the slave-system. It was found to be an expensive and losing system. Slave labour produced less than free labour, and produced it at greater cost. The master came to find that it paid him better to let the worker have some interest in the results of his labours, and to work in the first instance for his own hand. "The experience of all ages and nations, I believe," writes the author of the *Wealth of Nations*, "demonstrates that the work done by slaves, though it appears to cost only their maintenance, is in the end the dearest of any. A person who can acquire no property, can have no other interest but to eat as much, and to labour as little as possible. Whatever work he does beyond what is sufficient to purchase his own maintenance, can be squeezed out of him by violence only, and not by any interest of his own."[1]

The Greeks and the Romans were quite alive to this consideration,[2] and it was very keenly perceived in the modern world. Under feudalism it became the interest of the master to set his serfs free. He frequently raised money by demanding the payment of fees for this freedom. "Since the serfs became his free tenants, and must remain and till his land, he really lost nothing by setting them free, but rather gained."[3] In the slave-using English colonies, it was found that the profits on sugar and tobacco were great enough to allow slavery, but that in districts where the principal produce was corn, men could not afford it. As regards America, Professor Wayland writes, "No

[1] *Wealth of Nations*, bk. iii. ch. ii., Bax' ed., i. 393.
[2] Adam Smith instances Aristotle, Pliny, and Columella, *op. cit.*, i. 393.
[3] Thatcher and Schwill, *Europe in the Middle Age*, p. 225.

country, not of great fertility, can long sustain a large slave population. Soils of more than ordinary fertility cannot sustain it long, after the first richness of the soil has been exhausted. Hence, slavery in this country is acknowledged to have impoverished many of our most valuable districts."[1] Since the American Civil War, it is found that the produce of cotton in the South by free labour greatly exceeds what was produced by slavery. The annual average for the first twenty years after slavery, exceeded that of the twenty years immediately preceding abolition, by no less than 65·3 per cent. "This shows," says Lecky, "that the Southern belief that utter and imminent ruin must follow abolition was an absolute delusion."[2]

Such an element in the case must therefore be fully recognised. At the same time, some writers greatly err in hailing it as really the one efficient cause of emancipation. Sismondi declares "that neither philosophy nor religion, but personal interests alone" abolished slavery in Italy.[3] Mr. Belfort Bax, in editing the *Wealth of Nations*, adds a note (in this instance unable to refrain from contradicting his statement in the Preface that he will only annotate when absolutely necessary as a corrective of the text), in which he praises Adam Smith's perception in this matter, and says, "'Philanthropy' got the credit of what was at bottom a purely economic revolution. . . . Had economic conditions not favoured [the Northern States in their decision], the eloquence of a Fox or a Wilberforce would have been expended in vain."[4] This is altogether too cynical and purblind. It is just as false to attribute abolition entirely to economics as it would be to attribute it entirely to religion. If the clergy have sometimes gone to extremes in their interpretation of history, no less have the secularist and the man of science. Human motives

[1] Wayland, *Elements of Moral Science*, Edin. ed. (1847), p. 200.

[2] *Democracy and Liberty*, i. ch. v., ed. 1889, p. 490. For many interesting details on the economic view of the subject, cf. Chambers, *American Slavery and Colour*.

[3] *Italian Republics*, cit. Babington, Hulsean Lect., p. 173.

[4] I. 394.

have been a great deal too complex for both parties. There is a passage in Guizot's Lectures well worth recalling in this connection. "I fear," he says, speaking of St. Boniface, "that you are tempted to see more especially in this conduct the influence of temporal motives, of ambitious and interested combinations: it is a good deal the disposition of our time; and we are even a little inclined to boast of it, as a proof of our liberty of mind and our good sense. Most certainly let us judge all things in full liberty of mind; let the severest good sense preside at our judgments; but let us feel that, wherever we meet with great things and great men, there are other motives than ambitious combinations and personal interests."[1]

3. Such other motives undoubtedly had place in the mitigation of slavery even from the beginning, and were no small factor also in its abolition. It is only due to our common nature as well as to actual evidence, as clear as evidence of motive ever can be, to recognise the moral and humane element. We ought also to distinguish it, especially at certain stages of history, from the purely religious or Christian motive. There came a time when Christianity, with its distinctly ethical and benevolent teaching, had so spread over Europe, and had obtained such influence, conscious and unconscious, on the minds of men, that it becomes exceedingly difficult to distinguish between what is due to it, and what ought fairly to be attributed to a more universal and merely humanitarian instinct. Men have sometimes claimed to be animated by motives that are simply philosophic and humane, and have spurned the religion which has been impregnating the atmosphere with their principles for centuries. They have no more been independent of this influence than they have been independent of the air they breathed. Revolutionary France has been lauded for its cry of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," as if these had first burst on the world with the tumbrils and the Marseillaise. France neither invented the ideas, nor yet taught the world how to attain

[1] *History of Civilisation*, Lect. XIX., Bohn's ed., ii. 177.

them. They are at least as old as the Epistle to Philemon, if men would consider.

But previous to Constantine, it is quite right to recognise that there was much said and done in favour of the slave in which the Christian religion can claim no share. Plato, Aristotle, and Zeno had long inculcated the principles of humanity in the treatment of slaves. The Stoic school generally uttered many noble sentiments on the subject. Seneca, in some of his Epistles, shows a liberal and kindly spirit worthy of a Christian moralist. Horace and Plutarch commend forgiveness and lenity to slaves. Pliny, both by word and deed, raised an excellent ideal of mastership. Nor was the popular conscience altogether quiescent. We may take it as to some extent reflected by the popular poets, for Juvenal, Persius, and Martial, scathingly satirise tyrants. Seneca also tells us that masters guilty of cruelty were "pointed at and insulted in the streets." The temples and the statues of the Emperor were sanctuaries to the slave. In legislation, the Lex Petronia, which belongs to the Neronian period, restricted masters in condemning their slaves to fight with wild beasts, and it was by no means the only humane act of the same period. Claudius regulated the treatment of sick slaves, and decreed that a master who killed a sick slave was to be held guilty of murder; further, that a slave abandoned by his master on account of disease or infirmity should be free. Domitian forbade certain cruel forms of mutilation, and Hadrian took away the right of life and death from masters altogether. The latter Emperor was indeed specially distinguished for his reforms. He swept the infamous ergastula, or underground slave-prisons, out of existence; he appointed magistrates to judge of complaints of slaves against their masters; and he sent at least one Roman lady into exile for five years for atrocious cruelty. Kidnapping came to be punished by death, and mutilation by exile. No doubt the general treatment remained abominable, and that in spite of all the efforts of legislation: so abominable, that slaves in large numbers were driven to suicide to escape their misery. Nevertheless, the tide had turned in favour of better things in pagan

Rome; and "when to these laws," says Lecky, "we add the broad maxims of equity asserting the essential equality of the human race, which the jurists had borrowed from the Stoics, and which supplied the principles to guide the judges in their decisions, it must be admitted that the slave code of Imperial Rome compares not unfavourably with those of some Christian nations"[1]—an opinion which no student of Colonial history can venture to challenge.

4. The influence of the Christian religion, however, we still hold to have been the paramount influence in the amelioration and cessation of slavery. This influence has had its imperfections and retrogressions, but it has supported and worked alongside other influences in the same direction; it has gone deeper than they, and it has been more persistent and abiding. We need not lay stress on the enactments of Constantine as due in any great measure to Christian influence, but in the reforms of Theodosius that influence is undoubted, and in those of Justinian it is most conspicuous. Justinian laid down lines of legislation that made straight for the extinction of slavery, and if his policy had been better followed out by his successors, the consummation would have been been reached far earlier than it actually was. He earnestly encouraged the manumission of slaves, and greatly strengthened the hands of the Church in its efforts in that direction; above all, he secured that the slave when he was freed should have open to him all the privileges of citizenship. But the influence of Christianity is not to be read in the statute-book solely or even chiefly. We accept the verdict of Mr. Lecky, whom it is important to quote, if only for the simple reason that he is so far removed from any suspicion of holding a brief for the Christian religion. He says: "The services of Christianity in this sphere were of three kinds. It supplied a new order of relations, in which the distinction of classes was unknown. It imparted a moral dignity to the servile classes, and it gave an unexampled impetus to the movement of enfranchisement." Again, he

[1] *European Morals*, i. 308.

says of the Church, that it "never failed to listen to the poor and the oppressed, and for many centuries their protection was the foremost of all the objects of its policy." Once more, speaking of the monasteries and their example, the busy communities that often gathered round them, and the incessant endeavour to break down the old antipathy to labour, and to commend toil by its fruits, he says: "By these means the contempt for labour which had been produced by slavery was corrected, and the path was opened for the rise of the industrial classes."[1]

Every one of these statements has been abundantly verified by history. But the Christian influence has been essentially progressive. It did these things, but it did more, for undoubtedly its hand was on the hammer that ultimately struck the shackles from the slave; and its voice was the voice that brought the human conscience to a point from which it will be hard for it to recede, the point, namely, of recognising the inherent wrongfulness of the slave system. It is perfectly true that the Christian Church did not take up this position from the beginning. It was not so led, and that is why we say its influence was one of growth. The Church itself grew in perception and in experience. Christian bishops and martyrs were in their time owners of slaves, and the Church did not begin by laying its axe at the root of the tree, because it did not at first perceive that the tree must perish. Its method was not one of assault, but of very slow and patient undermining of a position, yet a position which it did not consciously mean to destroy. This is simple recognition of fact. But the process of undermining was real all the same. The Christian religion, simply because it was Christian, though not in a perfect degree, began to introduce principles which were bound at length to produce great changes in the social relations. It fostered the most humane sentiments, and championed the cause of the down-trodden. No fewer than thirty-seven of its Councils passed acts in favour of the bondsman. It made no

[1] *European Morals*, ii. 66; *Rationalism in Europe*, ii. 239, 240.

distinction between the slave and his master at the altar. It administered the same sacraments to both, and pronounced over both the same benediction. If it favoured one class above another, it was rather the class that served than the class that ruled, and it crowned its martyred slaves with an aureole which it denied to princes. "The first and grandest edifice of Byzantine architecture in Italy—the noble church of St. Vital, at Ravenna—was dedicated by Justinian to the memory of a martyred slave."[1]

Further, the Christian Church perpetually encouraged the manumission of slaves, and made it a meritorious act. It carried out the change with solemn celebrations as a religious service, and its sons and daughters were accustomed to declare that they freed their bond-servants "pro amore Dei," and "pro remedio animæ." The doors of the monasteries were open to slaves, and, when their purpose was believed to be sincere, their emancipation took place the moment they entered the service of the Church. The highest offices of the Christian priesthood were open to them, and he who once had been a slave was often in the position of rendering the most sacred services to the kneeling figure of his erewhile lord.

It cannot be doubted by any reasonable student on what side all this persistent influence lay, and what was likely to be its ultimate issue. It is true the modern world witnessed a startling retrogression. It has been sufficiently confessed, and perhaps even in blood sufficiently atoned for. But it was epoch-making in this respect, that it opened Christian eyes as they had not before been opened. The truth was indeed descried before, but only here and there, as it were by isolated heralds who reached the mountain-top. It was especially over the question of American slavery that the light flashed full on Christendom, and that its conscience was finally awakened and delivered. Even then there was resistance within the Church's pale, but it was essentially so far astray that it will not bear restate-

[1] *European Morals*, ii. 69.

ment. Christianity saw for the first time in clear light what its Scriptures really meant, and what was the message that actually lay at their heart. It had taken long to make the discovery that slavery was absolutely antagonistic to the root principles of the gospel, but it was made in a ripe hour, and once made, we do not anticipate that it will ever be let go. Never perhaps was there a movement more distinctly Christian than that which began with Clarkson, Granville Sharp, and Wilberforce, at the close of the eighteenth century, and which reached its final goal well on in the nineteenth. Its inspiration and its strength were found in religion. The closing words of Clarkson's famous Essay (1786), *On the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species*, were these: "No custom established among men was ever more impious; since it is contrary to reason, justice, nature, the principles of law and government, the whole doctrine, in short, of natural religion, and the revealed voice of God." Such sentiments were soon taken up and reiterated on the floor of the House of Commons; they roused responsive echoes in the popular conscience, and they were the herald of a national Act of Abolition which has been truly described "as among the three or four absolutely virtuous pages comprised in the history of nations." The change was possible and was effected because men's hearts were changed, and they were changed by the only power on this earth that has ever resolutely and hopefully set itself so to change them.

## IV

## SLAVERY AND THE BIBLE.

Has Christianity in this matter run contrary to the Bible, or has it even run ahead of it? It would be strange if it had reached its goal by appealing to teaching from which nevertheless it is essentially divergent. It has been asserted, however, that this is so, and that not abolition but slavery has the real sanction of the Divine Word. In

which case, again, it is very remarkable that apart from the Bible, and outside its influence, the world has never in all its history witnessed any current of opinion against slavery, much less a wide-spread moral aversion to it, and a determined resolve on its extinction. Those who think the Bible to blame for its reticence and low tone on the matter, have never solved this historical problem, or even seriously attempted to solve it.

The Old Testament has naturally been made much use of in this controversy. Domestic slavery was a patriarchal custom, and it was continued and minutely regulated in the Mosaic legislation. Modern upholders of slavery appealed to this in support of the system. Some of them exclaimed, with an approach to blasphemy, "It is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes: The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart."[1] This particular Mosaic institution, however, was the only one of which they were so enamoured. Other features of Jewish legalism were still regarded as a yoke from which happily Christ had set men free. Not this. It is not necessary to ask why, or indeed to discuss the matter at all. Jewish hearts were hard, and many things were allowed them, which were never meant to be of perpetual and universal obligation. Christ Himself taught men so, and divine revelation is quite consistent with the progressive character of the education of the race. But besides that, the Mosaic legislation was essentially mitigating and restricting. It neither introduced slavery nor meant to perpetuate it. It ringed it round with restraints and obligations, which the modern slave-system quite ignored and despised: so much so that if Hebrew slavery had truly been taken as a model, the Christian world would have been spared not merely many an inhuman scene, but many a disgraceful statute.[2]

[1] Cf. Chambers, *Slavery and Colour*, and Mrs. Stowe, *Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, for these and similar sentiments.

[2] Cf. especially Sections ii. and iii. of Goldwin Smith's *Does the Bible Sanction American Slavery?* Professor Smith has said that this little book was written when he was still "in the penumbra of orthodoxy," and that it would now need to be greatly modified (*Guesses at the Riddle of*

It is with the attitude of the New Testament, however, that Christians are more deeply concerned. The Lord Jesus, so far as is recorded, never denounced slavery, or indeed dealt with it specifically at all. Neither did His Apostles. They found it everywhere prevailing, and their immediate purpose was not to criticise the social system but to convert men to the kingdom of God. As Zahn puts it, the gospel set out not as a programme of world-reform, but as the proclamation of a world-salvation. Hence the efforts of the first preachers were rather to make masters and slaves good men than to sever the relation between them. It was not even expressly indicated that the relation was one that ought to be severed. The subject did not present itself in such an acute form to the Apostles' minds. They were under the influence of great spiritual hopes and ideals which threw mundane matters for the time largely into the shade. The liberty of the Spirit, and the coming of the kingdom of heaven, seemed to make all that was now endured but a "light affliction." There was something better prepared, and something better even now enjoyed. They could have said,

> "Stone walls do not a prison make,
> Nor iron bars a cage;
> Minds, innocent and quiet, take
> That for an hermitage."

Above all, they laid exultant hold on immortality and the life that is hid with Christ in God. This made all else appear insignificant, a possession that would be theirs when the great globe itself dissolved, and left not a rack behind.

> "The soul, secured in her existence, smiles
> At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.
> The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
> Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years;
> But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
> Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
> The wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds."

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*Existence*, p. 88 n.). That may be so, but we are more than content with it. The Professor has written much since he passed out of the eclipse, but never anything finer or truer than this. It will remain a classic when much else from his pen has passed into oblivion.

With such thoughts and themes they were most profoundly occupied. At the same time they were engaged in a work that was destined to go deeper than they knew. They delivered the message of the Spirit, and in the history of the ages that message has unfolded its inherent power, and made applications and expansions, which it was not the least needful for the Apostles themselves to particularise or foresee.

Regarding this whole subject there are several considerations of importance to bear in mind.

1. In the first place, this attitude of Christ and the Apostles was their attitude not merely to slavery but to the whole social system of their day. Slavery was not the only gigantic evil with which they were face to face. It was one of many. Yet in every case the attitude was that of patient submission. If we argue that the New Testament approves of slavery because it does not directly denounce it, it will be valid also to claim its support in favour of some of the worst evils that have ever afflicted the world. Some have gone that length, but not reasonable men. The attitude of Christ and His Apostles to all the institutions of their evil world was one, says Goldwin Smith, "of deep spiritual hostility and of entire political submission. . . . The things which are Cæsar's are rendered unto Cæsar, though Cæsar is a Tiberius or a Nero. To endure patiently the dominion of those monsters, it has been truly said, was the honour of Christianity and the dishonour of mankind."[1]

2. Hence the second consideration. Not to denounce is not the same thing as to sanction. Yet opponents of the Bible have continually confused the two things.[2] To mitigate and regulate slavery with earnest counsels, to exhort converts on both sides to play their parts in a manner worthy of the new spirit they profess to breathe, slaves to do good-will service, and masters to render what is just and equal, is very far from being tantamount to an

[1] *Does the Bible*, etc., p. 97.

[2] Cf., *e.g.*, again and again in F. W. Newman's *Phases of Faith*, ch. v.

assertion that the relation is in itself ideal and perpetual.[1] It would be preposterous to think that when our Lord counselled the patient submission of both cheeks to the smiter, He thereby meant to consecrate personal violence. And although an Apostle exhorted to 'honour the King,' no apologist of slavery would ever have allowed that such a saying was sufficient to sanctify all royal acts, or even to make Republicanism an impossible form of government in a Christian State. Paul's return of Onesimus to Philemon has been triumphantly regarded as a clear evidence of 'sanction,' but only when the fact is stated baldly by itself, and when the letter and spirit of the Epistle are totally neglected. Paul did return Onesimus, but not without the words, "not as a slave, but above a slave, a brother beloved." It is intense blindness that does not perceive something radical and far-reaching there.

3. We have, therefore, to bear well in mind that the New Testament does in point of fact lay down principles which are utterly subversive of slavery. This it does, not here or there but broadcast, and not in words merely, but in deeds that are even more eloquent than words. Christ showed compassion on slaves by direct acts of mercy, and He opened wide to them, as to all other men, the door of the kingdom of heaven. He taught the universal love and Fatherhood of God, from which the brotherhood of man flows as a necessary corollary. He taught what the world recognises as the Golden Rule,—a great word,

[1] It must be remembered that it is an argument against the 'Church' and not against the Bible when Mr. Newman argues that Christianity strove to free and secure the rights of the slave because he was a Christian, and not simply because he was a man. Bible Christianity, if the distinction must be made, welcomes all men with equal freedom to whatever blessings it confers: nor does the Apostle so distinguish as to tell the master to be just merely to converted slaves, or slaves to be faithful only to converted masters. Besides, Newman's argument is very lame as it relates even to the Church; for when the Church began openly and vigorously to champion the slave the Empire was no longer pagan, and all slaves dealt with were in countries that were at least nominally Christian. Still further, even if Newman were right, the Church did not end in its activities in the Middle Ages, and the very age in which he wrote was daily giving the most conspicuous contradiction to his contention.

which turns a very keen edge on a man's treatment of his fellows. And the Apostles followed in His steps. They welcomed slaves and masters alike into the household of faith, with all the deep significance which that implied. They taught that God is no respecter of persons, and that distinctions of race and rank are nothing in His holy sight. He has "made of one blood" all the nations of the earth, and in Christ Jesus there is neither Greek nor barbarian, bond nor free. It is absolutely impossible to ignore what these things would grow to. Slowly and surely as they gained strength they would revolutionise the world. Everything might not be present to the mind at once, but seed was sown that could not miss its harvest. Abolition is in the New Testament as the oak is in the acorn, as the flower is in the root.

"There is a day in spring
When under all the earth the secret germs
Begin to stir and glow before they bud.
The wealth and festal pomps of midsummer
Lie in the heart of that inglorious hour
Which no man names with blessing, though its work
Is blessed by all the world."

4. Let us further remember that a revelation of the Divine Will is none the less valid though it come indirectly. It is absurd to attempt to define the mode, the manner, and the time in which God shall make His mind flash absolutely clearly on the minds of men. To argue that if slavery be essentially wrong, and if the Bible be in a true sense the Word of God, then the New Testament must at once and explicitly have denounced it, is very great presumption as well as manifest folly. Whether God say "Thou shalt not," or whether He leave His meaning to be gathered by inference, makes no essential difference to revelation as such. Our Lord warned His disciples that there were many things He could not tell them now; and promised that by and bye the Spirit would take of the things that are His and show them to His followers. That revelation when it comes is no new revelation; it is but the unfolding of what lay

in the bosom of the old, and it has the characteristic of every truly divine word, that it is absolutely binding at whatever moment it is recognised.

5. This leads to the last consideration. Never was there a more signal mark of divine wisdom than in the way the Apostles were led to speak and to act, in face of the social and political problems of their age. No just-minded man believes that they were guilty of compromise and accommodation, consciously withholding truth in order to save themselves and their converts. We simply distort things if we represent the policy as one of calculated expediency. But in the training and discipline of the race, God leaves something for man himself to do and discover. Not with regard to slavery alone, but with regard to all social evils, man must work out his salvation. This goes on slowly, and painfully, and imperfectly, inasmuch as the progress depends not so much on the carving and redress of circumstances, as on the changes of the human heart. As water cannot rise above its level, so neither can human society be better than the spirits of the men who compose it. Each age has its possible best, and that best is always according to the attainment of Christian grace.

Now, in the case of slavery, God is in partnership with man, a fellow-labourer with him, in ridding the world of a great curse. The part He plays is that of instilling, 'working in,' good principles, which He sets like seed in the hearts of His children. It is His true concern that that seed shall not be trampled to death before it has even got a chance to germinate. He leads and guides and conserves towards that end; and it is to our eyes the complete justification of the revelation which some have presumed to declare should have been more explicit and direct. We could scarcely, on the contrary, have recognised any spirit of wisdom had the Apostles been led to launch themselves out on the sea of political revolution. The message they had to deliver, which went to the root of slavery and all other social wrongs, and which enshrined within itself the hope of the ages both

for this life and for that which is to come, would have been choked and stifled in its very utterance. God had prepared some better thing for it and for the world. It was to live and blossom and bear fruit, and not from the start to lie mangled under the heel as a political sedition. The gospel takes a certain course, not by the craft of men, but by the over-ruling providence of God; not because the Apostles were in league for the suppression of truth, but because another Hand than theirs was infallibly guiding to its full disclosure. The words of Professor Wayland express the matter very admirably:

"The gospel was designed, not for one race or for one time, but for all races and for all times. It looked, not at the abolition of this form of evil for that age alone, but for its universal abolition. Hence the important object of its Author was to gain it a lodgment in every part of the known world; so that, by its universal diffusion among all classes of society, it might quietly and peacefully modify and subdue the evil passions of men; and thus, without violence, work a revolution in the whole mass of mankind. In this manner alone could its object, a universal moral revolution, have been accomplished. For if it had forbidden the *evil*, instead of subverting the *principle;* if it had proclaimed the unlawfulness of slavery, and taught slaves to *resist* the oppression of their masters; it would instantly have arrayed the two parties in deadly hostility throughout the civilised world: its announcement would have been the signal of servile war; and the very name of the Christian religion would have been forgotten amidst the agitations of universal bloodshed. The fact, under these circumstances, that the gospel does not forbid slavery, affords no reason to suppose that it does not mean to prohibit it; much less does it afford ground for belief that Jesus Christ intended to *authorise* it."[1]

In the fierce agitation that preceded the American Civil War, those who took the side of Southern slavery were wont to hurl at their opponents, and especially at Great Britain, the taunt "Physician, heal thyself." They were keen-sighted in discovering the faults that still

[1] *Elements of Moral Science*, bk. ii. pt. ii., ch. on Personal Liberty.

lingered in our social system, and roundly told us that we were not in a position to take the mote from any one's eye. It is a common polemical method; the most uninstructed dialectician always knows instinctively how to lay his hand on so facile a weapon. Yet, though it be no defence of the evil it is meant to shield, it may have in it much justice, and it is well to pay heed to it, and bow before it. The Americans heard the cry of our children, the curses of our proletariat, and the groans of the white-slaves of our sweating systems.[1] The social condition was not yet perfect that united master and man chiefly by the cash-nexus, and scarcely by any living interest or sympathy The nation should be dumb whose own vices are in such scandalous contradiction to its high professions, and should first reckon with these. There are other slaveries than those of the plantations. There is the slavery of passion, of strong drink, of lust, of covetousness, and these drive men into degradation as deep as the negro ever knew. All that we heard. All that we needed to hear, and to remember.

Finally, as we turn from this memorable Epistle, the words of Luther haunt our ears: "We are all God's Onesimi." There is no such thing in the world as absolute freedom for any man. In the most orderly human society each man's liberty is limited, and the wise man consents, because he perceives that liberty is thereby the better secured. So is it also with the spirit. It is our wisdom to say, "Our wills are ours to make them Thine." It is only then they move with full and happy freedom. Christians remain slaves for ever—the slaves of righteousness. The glorious liberty wherewith Christ makes us free, is liberty to enter the service of the Highest. Until we recognise this deeper truth, this paradox of liberty by subjection and service to the divine ideal, we are fettered and earth-bound.

> "Freedom's secret wilt thou know?
> Counsel not with flesh and blood;
> Loiter not for cloak or food;
> Right thou feelest, rush to do."

[1] Cf. N. Adams, *South-Side View of Slavery*, where ch. xiv. is taken up with the recrimination of Great Britain.

# THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

## I.

## EPHESUS AND THE EPISTLE.

It is almost certain that Paul did not write this Epistle to the Christians of Ephesus exclusively.[1] At the same time it is most probable that they shared in its reception; and as the city had so intimate a relation with the Apostle, and was itself so full of interest in apostolic times, we may briefly refer to it.

The site of Ephesus is to-day only a pestilential swamp There are even very few ruins to be seen, the most noticeable perhaps being some melancholy traces on the mountain-side of the great theatre where Demetrius of old led the uproar against the Apostle, and where the excited mob shouted its delirious cry for the space of two hours. The famous inland harbour and its canal are made out chiefly by the luxuriance of the rushes which choke them,[2] and, at some seasons of the year, by the magnificent bloom of the yellow iris. The course of the Cayster to the sea is traced by bogs and lagoons, and has no sign of life about it, save a few scattered fisher-huts near its mouth. Fire, sword, and pestilence, and the silting deposit of many winter floods, have done their work; "the land is guarded by Divine vengeance from the intrusion of thoughtless

[1] On the Destination, see later, pp. 369–379.

[2] The rushes grow to 15 ft. Wood, *Discoveries at Ephesus*, pp. 4–5.

man, by the scorpion and centipede, by marshes infested with myriads of serpents, and by attendant fever, dysentery, and ague."[1]

A few signs of humanity, however, are to be found about a mile farther inland near the site of the renowned Temple of Diana. A poor Turkish village of some two hundred inhabitants clusters here, and boasts of a station on the Ottoman railway.[2] Its name of Ayasalouk is supposed to be a corruption of Ἅγιος Θεολόγος, the title of the revered Apostle John. Here a church was built in his honour in the sixth century under Justinian, and on its site now stand the picturesque ruins of the Mosque of Îsa Bey, both buildings having doubtless owed much of their glory to the prostrate shrine of the ancient goddess. It was not till the latter half of the nineteenth century that the discovery was actually made that the Temple of Diana had stood here, a mile outside the city. The honour of the discovery is due to the patient excavations of Mr. J. T. Wood, who came on the remains of the surrounding wall some twenty feet below the surface, on the last day of the year 1869.[3] The story reads like a romance, though little but the certainty of the site was found: only "the substructures of the walls, the base of a column, and some fluted drums."[4] Truly a difficult task, to reconstruct from these the splendour of the sixth wonder of the world!

> "Hereafter, turned to dust
> Diana's fane, reared high in Ephesus,
> Shall in the stress and shock of the whelming sea
> Sink like a ship sucked down by the sea-waves,
> And fallen Ephesus wail upon the strand
> Seeking her temple still, where none dwells more."[5]

But the scene was very different in Paul's day. Ephesus was then a large and prosperous city, sharing

[1] Falkener, *Ephesus and the Temple of Diana*, pp. 5–6.

[2] G. Weber, in Murray's *Handbook to Asia Minor*, ed. Sir C. Wilson, 1895.

[3] *Discoveries*, p. 155.

[4] Weber, *loc. cit.*

[5] *Jewish Sibylline Oracles*, cit. Hausrath, *Time of the Apostles*, iii. 258.

with Smyrna the title of "the light of Asia." It owed its prosperity very much to its fine natural position on the great highway between the East and the West.[1] Through it poured the merchandise of Egypt and Italy and Greece, *en route* for Persia and inner Asia. Its crowded harbour lay some three miles up the river from the sea, and was peculiarly safe from storms and foes. The river itself teemed with fish. The fields and sunny slopes of Mounts Prion and Coressus were covered with vineyards and yielded abundant harvests. Traders were keen and made hay while the sun shone, being noted all over the world as dealers in gold and silver, jewellery, amulets and charms, marble, red-lead and vermilion from the mines, unguents and dyes of all kinds, tents, honey, and valuable slaves. No wonder they chose the industrious bee as their city emblem, and stamped it on their coins. Nor was there lack of fame in other directions. It was a city of poets, philosophers, physicians, painters, sculptors, and architects. Heraclitus, Hipponax, Parrhasius, and Apelles, were natives, while Phidias, Praxiteles, Polycletus, and Scopas, did much of their most famous work within its walls. Paul must have seen, whether or not he paused much to admire, the great public buildings which had recently been reared under the munificence of Augustus and Tiberius.

Above all, his eyes must often have rested on the Temple of Artemis which gleamed like a meteor on the brow of the hill beyond the gates. It was universally acknowledged to be one of the most sacred and most beautiful shrines in the world. Poets like Martial compared it to the wonders of Babylon, the pyramids of Egypt, and the Colosseum of Rome. It had been seven times rebuilt on the same site, and covered a huge area. Its style was Ionic, the design of Dinocrates, the architect who planned Alexandria, and is described as being of remarkable purity and grace. It was raised on a broad pavement ten feet above the ground, surrounded by double colonnades of richly sculptured pillars, "one by Scopas"

[1] Cf. Ramsay, *Hist. Geog. of Asia Minor*, p. 59.

it is proudly remembered, and "each the gift of a king."[1] The building immediately preceding this was destroyed in the fourth century B.C. by Erostratus, an old-world anarchist and madman, who could only think of achieving notoriety by crime. He set fire to it on the very night on which Alexander the Great was born, when Artemis was naturally absent in Macedonia, as Hegesias of Magnesia said—a ponderous joke, adds Plutarch, dull enough to have extinguished the fire.[2] Later on, Alexander offered to rebuild the Temple at his own expense, should he be permitted to inscribe his name on the dedication. The wily priests, wishing to offend neither Persia nor Greece, escaped the dilemma by replying that "it was not fitting that one god should build a Temple to another."

The dark interior of the Temple possessed the famous image "which fell from Jupiter," and which ought much rather to have been called Cybele than either Artemis or Diana.[3] It evidently symbolised the Mother-power of Nature, and is too well known to need description. Mummified and many-breasted, hideous and inartistic, it was nevertheless regarded with supreme veneration, and so great was the atmosphere of superstitious dread that surrounded it, that the Temple precincts were considered the safest bank in the world. Untold treasure is said to have been deposited in its secret chambers. "The great goddess had from time immemorial kept in her temple a bank of deposit; her credit was so good that for centuries the treasures of kings and of private persons were confided

[1] Cf. the ideal restorations in the works of Falkener and Wood.

[2] *Life of Alexander*, Stewart and Long's ed., iii. 302.

[3] "The Ephesian Artemis, whose original name is supposed to have been Upis, was one of several deities in Asia Minor, whose worship the Greek settlers found much too firmly established to be rooted out, and whom they therefore adopted in their own systems of mythology. . . . The types of these primitive deities are barbaric and un-Hellenic. . . . Herr Curtius thinks that the worship of Artemis may have been founded at Ephesus by the Carians and Phœnicians, to whom the abundance of springs here may have suggested the dedication of a shrine to the great goddess of nature, who makes the earth fertile by humidity" (*Edinburgh Review*, Jan. 1877, p. 207).

to her care."[1] The interior was also adorned with priceless works of art, among which was the masterpiece of Apelles, his portrait of Alexander wielding the thunderbolt, for which he is said to have received the fabulous sum of twenty talents of gold, nearly forty thousand pounds of our money, and regarding which it was remarked: "There were two Alexanders: the one begotten of Philip, and he was invincible; the other painted by Apelles, and he was inimitable."[2] The Temple had also other distinctions. It was the centre of a most immoral worship; its privilege of 'sanctuary' protected and encouraged crime to an alarming extent; and all its surroundings were the notorious purlieus of vice. A writer contemporary with Paul "describes Ephesian life in terms of fierce contempt, their lusts natural and unnatural, their frauds, their wars of words, their legal contentiousness, their faithlessness and perjuries, their robberies of temples. He denounces their vices in connection with the worship of Cybele and Dionysus, and with religious vigils and banquets, and alludes to details of sensuality associated with these meetings."[3] Moreover a gross superstition spread from the Temple, and fostered among the people a fond trust in all kinds of sorcery. Ephesian love-philtres, kabbalistic letters, spells, amulets, and charms, were well known all over the world, and formed the staple of a very lucrative trade.

Yet it was here that Paul spent one of the most active and fruitful periods of his life. He laboured among the Ephesians for 'three years,' going from house to house, and ceasing not to warn them day and night with tears. His parting with the elders at Miletus—one of the noblest and most touching scenes in the Bible—shows how close and tender his relations with them were. A large part of his heart was theirs. And he not only obtained a firm hold for the gospel in the city itself, he made Ephesus

[1] *Edinburgh Review*, Jan. 1877, p. 214.

[2] Plutarch, *Or. II. de Fort. Alex.*, cit. Falkener, p. 310.

[3] Gore, *Ephesians*, App. Note B, p. 255. On the so-called "Letters of Heraclitus," the work of a Stoic of Paul's day, cf. also Hausrath, *Time of the Apostles*, iii. 255–257.

the centre of an active propaganda that carried his Master's message into the interior, resulting in the formation of such Churches as those of Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colosse. The Church in Ephesus was thus a kind of mother-church, and maintained a leading position for several centuries. No less than six of the early ecclesiastical Councils were held under its shadow. It decayed, however, as the importance of the city itself steadily dwindled away. Bad engineering had long aided in the silting up of the river, which gradually ceased to be navigable; in the third century the Goths sacked the town, and finally destroyed the Temple; and probably by the time of Justinian most of the inhabitants had crept back to the original home of the population at Ayasalouk, while the crumbling ruins of the once glorious city were left to the vulture and the bat. The 'candlestick' was at last removed out of its place.

Considering the long and intimate relations of Paul with Ephesus, it is very natural that among his Epistles we should have one directed to the Church there, all the more that Tychicus, the messenger from his Roman captivity, was about to pass through the city on his way to Colosse. According to age-long tradition the letter before us is such an Epistle. An unbroken testimony of such a kind is undoubtedly of great weight, and, other signs being in harmony with it, it would naturally be regarded as decisive. But examination of the Epistle leads to certain questionings, if not to doubts, and two things have to be considered; whether after all the Epistle is Paul's, and, even if it be, whether it could possibly have been addressed to the Ephesians.

It will be well, however, in the first place, to gain a clear idea of the contents of the Epistle.

The opening verses contain a salutation similar to that in Colossians, except that the name of Timothy is not mentioned. Thereafter there is a division into two main parts at the close of the third chapter; the first three chapters being mainly doctrinal and didactic, the remaining three practical and hortatory.

1. Chapters i.–iii. This section opens in Paul's usual manner with Praise and Prayer; thereafter deals with the Reception of Gentile Christians into the Household of God, and with the Apostle's personal relation to such a gracious dispensation, finally concluding with a renewed Prayer and Doxology.

(1) Praise (i. 3–14). God is praised—"Blessed be God"—not at the moment for any particular gifts or graces bestowed on the readers of the Epistle, but generally for the rich spiritual blessings bestowed on all Christians. The whole passage, however, is very difficult and involved, full of curious parallelisms, loosely strung sentences, and recurrent phrases, in which the Pauline "telescopic" style of composition is carried to excess. It is not very satisfactory to divide by the recurrence of the rhythmical phrase "to the praise of His glory" (vv. 6 and 12), if simply for the reason that vv. 11–12 are thereby erroneously separated from vv. 13–14. Again, God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are all represented in the outpouring of grace, but it is a mistake to group the references to the blessings round these names. To do so may be theologically sound, but it is artificial, and not interpretative of any guiding thought in the mind of the writer. The thought of God the Father as the eternal source of the blessings, which spring from His grace and good pleasure and are for the praise of His glory, dominates the whole passage; Christ also appears continuously as the sole Mediator of the blessings; while the Holy Spirit is spoken of only in particular connection with the last one (ver. 13). If division be attempted, a threefold line of praise may be distinguished: (1) for God's eternal choice of believers as adopted sons in Christ, to the end that they should be in His sight holy and without blemish in love (vv. 3–6); (2) for Redemption through the Cross of Christ, and for the revelation of this 'mystery' of the Divine Will so long concealed; namely, the carrying out of a redemptive dispensation to be completed in the fulness of the times, whereby all things in heaven and earth are to be brought into entire harmony in Christ as

Head (vv. 7–10); and (3) for the predestined portion or heritage assigned in Christ both to those who, like the writer, had had a previous hope in the Messiah, and to those, like the Gentile readers, who, after hearing the gospel, believed, and were sealed by the Holy Ghost, whose indwelling power is the universal mark of the privilege, the obligation, and the security of the common inheritance, purchased but not yet fully possessed.[1]

(2) Prayer (i. 15–ii. 10). Paul has heard with increasing thankfulness of his readers' faith and love, and tells how he prays for them that God would bestow upon them a still higher knowledge of Himself, in the hope of His calling, in the riches of His inheritance, and in the exceeding greatness of His power.[2] This power has already had two signal manifestations: in Christ (vv. 20–23), and in Christians (ii. 1–10). In Christ it has been exhibited in His Resurrection, in His heavenly exaltation far above all other powers that can be named, present or to come, and in His supreme Headship to the Church, His mystical Body, which is penetrated and filled by Him who even fills the universe with His omnipotent and continuous activity.[3] In

[1] Von Soden, *Hand-Comm.* (ed. 1893), pp. 106–110, defines such a threefold division of the blessings as (1) their Eternal Decree, (2) their Historical Realisation, and (3) their Appropriation to the Elect of the two pre-Christian classes, Jews and Gentiles.

[2] "The three objects to be known are in reality one and the same under different points of view; the content of the "hope of the calling" is the inheritance, and this again in its realisation is an effect and proof of the power of God. Thus the object of the knowledge is the blessing to be obtained in the future kingdom of God" (Abbott, Int. Crit. Comm., *Ephesians*, p. 30).

[3] Τὸ πλήρωμα seems here equivalent to τὸ πεπληρωμένον. Cf. Meyer, *in loc.* Also Lightfoot, *Colossians*, p. 261, who refers to the different points of view in Colossians and Ephesians as leading to a corresponding difference in the use of πλήρωμα. Here it is "that plenitude of Divine graces and virtues which is communicated through Christ to the Church as His Body." So also Von Soden, in a well-reasoned passage, *Comm.*, p. 116. On the other hand, Abbott, p. 37, favours Chrysostom's interpretation: "He says πλήρωμα, just as the head is completed by the body." So also Aquinas, Beza, Baur, Pfleiderer, Oltramare, Weiss. "However complete He is in Himself, yet *as Head* He is not complete without His Body,"—the last clause of the verse immediately correcting any superficial inconsistency in the expression.

Both interpretations are logically possible, but on the whole critical opinion is in favour of the first.

Christians, whether Gentiles or Jews, it has been exhibited in the merciful and loving quickening of their dead sinful nature into newness of life, raising and exalting them with Christ, to display the riches of Divine grace, which saves not on account of good works but that good works may be accomplished.

(3) Reception of the Gentiles (ii. 11–end). Such marvellous tokens of Divine love must rouse strange thoughts in the Gentile heart. The readers of the Epistle must recall their former sad spiritual condition, and contrast it with their present position in the Divine kingdom, remembering to whom this is due and how much it signifies. Formerly they were without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, without hope, and without the knowledge of God; but now that dark state of alienation has been changed by Christ through the Cross, whereby He hath accomplished a glorious twofold work of peace, both removing every divisive obstacle between Jew and Gentile, making one new humanity that is neither Jewish nor Greek, and at the same time reconciling them all to God in one body, giving them all the same access to the Father in one Spirit. They are therefore no more strangers and foreigners, but by divine right are fellow-citizens with the saints, and members of the Household of God. To change the figure, they have been built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Christian prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the essential and indispensable bond, the chief corner-stone. In Him all that are so built, however separated by nationality or by diversity of experience, being fitly joined together, gradually grow unto a holy Temple in the Lord, a habitation of God, of which even now, in their ingathering and redeeming, the readers themselves are being made a part.[1]

(4) Paul's personal relation to this Divine Grace (iii.

[1] "The image is that of an extensive pile of buildings in process of construction at different points on a common plan. The several parts are adjusted to each other so as to preserve the unity of design." Abbott, p. 75, substantially reproducing Findlay, *Ephesians*, Expos. Bible, p. 146

1–13).[1] It is on account of this reception of the Gentiles into the Divine kingdom that Paul is now enduring imprisonment, so that his friends must not lose heart at tribulations which have so glorious a cause; that is, if he may take for granted, as he surely may, that they have heard of the grace given to him for their sakes: how that the mystery was revealed to him—what he has just briefly written will show how well he understands it[2]—the mystery, in earlier ages not made known, but now revealed to the holy Apostles and prophets, namely, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and of the same Body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel he himself became a minister by the grace and power of God. He can never forget so sacred a trust. It fills him at once with the deepest humility and with the sincerest joy. Though less than the least of all saints, it is given to him to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make clear the Divine arrangement of the 'mystery,' that through the Church should be made known even to principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God—formerly too hard to follow in its veiled and intricate relations to mankind, now marvellously shining forth in its glorious issue, the eternal Divine purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(5) Renewed Prayer and Doxology (iii. 14–end). For this cause—that is, the glad inclusion of the Gentiles—he earnestly prays for them that they may have in the inner higher life of the soul the indwelling strength of the Spirit

[1] Verse 13 is probably the completion of the thought in verse 1. Some, however, think that the thought of ver. 1 is held in suspense until the beginning of ch. iv., only to be again suspended until iv. 17. So Gore, *Ephesians*, p. 142.

[2] The reference is usually understood to be to i. 9 sqq. Gore (p. 131) thinks it is to Colossians (cf. Col. i. 25 sqq.). Hort, *Prolegomena*, p. 150, would take "read" in a technical sense as referring to the Old Testament Scriptures. Paul would thus seem to mean that when the recipients of his Epistle read the Old Testament prophecies, and compared them with his teaching, they would see how correctly he had apprehended the mystery of Christ. This interpretation, if it could be accepted, would remove a certain difficulty connected with the strangeness of the appeal as usually interpreted.

of Christ; that thereby with all saints they may comprehend the surpassing greatness of Christ's love; and finally, that they may be filled with all the communicable grace of the fulness of God.[1] Now unto the omnipotent God be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever.

2. Chapters iv.–vi. The practical exhortation now follows. The readers of the Epistle behold the high vocation with which they are called: let them walk worthily of it.

The virtues which they should conspicuously display are humility, meekness, long-suffering, forbearance, in order that the all-embracing unity of the Church, now given and enjoyed by the Spirit, may be preserved.

The mention of this unity leads to a brief doctrinal parenthesis (iv. 4–16), in which Paul gives a very emphatic and impressive declaration of the essential nature of Christian unity: one Body, one Spirit, one Hope; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; one God and Father of all. Yet this unity embraces great diversity of gift, every member having his own special grace from Christ. For Christ's ascent into heaven is followed as its natural consequence by His descent again to earth, in order to give His gifts to men—such a spiritual coming as has already been referred to in His "preaching peace" and "dwelling in the heart by faith."[2] Thus, they are His gifts who labour as Apostles, as prophets, as evangelists, as pastors and teachers; and all tend to the same gracious end, the perfecting of the saints, the edifying of the Body of Christ, a work that gradually grows perfect in faith, in knowledge, and in steadfastness, deriving all its strength from Christ the Head.

[1] "That ye may be filled with divine gifts of grace to such an extent that the whole fulness of them shall have passed over upon you." Meyer, *in loc.*

[2] Cf. Von Soden, pp. 135–136; Abbott, pp. 115–116. Against the interpretation of a descent into Hell, cf. Weiss, *Bib. Theol. of the N.T.*, ii. 100 n., and Pfleiderer, *Paulinism*, ii. 170 n.; Eadie, *Ephesians*, pp. 291 sqq. (ed. 1883); Macpherson, *Ephesians*, pp. 301–302; Winer, *Grammar*, p. 666 (ed. 1870); Grimm-Thayer, *Lexicon*, p. 341[b]. On the other hand, cf. Meyer, *Ephesians*, pp. 213–214 (ed. 1895); and Klöpper, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, pp. 127–128.

In verse 17 the Apostle recurs to his exhortation. Christians must turn their backs for ever on the old Gentile ways, which were so alien from the life of God and from the Spirit of Christ, and must exhibit the graces of the new life in righteousness and holiness of truth. He particularly warns against falsehood, anger, dishonesty, evil-speaking, and exhorts rather to forgiveness and love on the Divine model. They must jealously watch against the manifold and deceitful forms of vice which were common around them, walking as wise men, redeeming the time, shunning every exhilaration that is not spiritual and uplifting. Above all, their Christian homes, in all their intimate relations of husbands and wives, children and parents, masters and servants, must be well-ordered and pure—the relation of husbands and wives being specially enforced and illumined by comparison, as far as such comparison is possible, with the relation of Christ Himself to the Church, now the subject of so profound a revelation. Finally, the readers must fit themselves for their spiritual conflict, by putting on the whole armour of God, described in a passage of great animation and beauty.

In concluding the Epistle, the Apostle commends his messenger Tychicus as one who will give full tidings of his affairs, and utters a benediction on all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with a spiritual and imperishable love.

The Epistle is thus seen to be quite an orderly structure. It proceeds on definite lines, clearly distinguished, and ably, if sometimes rather copiously, developed. The writer makes no reference to any personal relations with his readers, and he does not, at least directly, combat any heresy or defection within their ranks. They are Gentile converts, and he warns them very earnestly against the allurements and seductions of the old life that still surges so powerfully around them, and also against the subtler and darker powers of spiritual evil that are sure to assail them with many temptations. But above all, he entertains a deep joy and ceaseless wonder at the divine grace which has gathered them into the great Household of God. That Household is one and all-embracing, deriving its unity, its

life, its growth, its strength, its perfection, from Christ alone. He is its supreme and ever-living Head. Nothing can be more needful than to preserve the unity which is created and exists in Him.

The likeness to Colossians is immediately apparent. The substratum, the general outline, the representations of the writer's circumstances, the Gentile-Christian class of readers, the commission given to Tychicus, are essentially the same. Several of the leading thoughts recur, and are presented in identical language. The relations of Christ to the universe and to the Church are a dominant theme in both; the references to the spirit-world and its principalities and powers, and to the need of divine wisdom and knowledge among the readers, are common; and the ethical teaching is strikingly similar, both in its precepts and in its lines of application. On the other hand, the divergences are very marked. In Colossians everything is definite and local; here, indefinite and general, nor have we any such personal references as those at the close of Colossians. In Colossians there are clear sounds of antagonism, but none here that are very distinct: the former Epistle is polemic, this is designed rather to ward off strife. Again, the relation of Christ to the universe receives the chief emphasis in Colossians, while in Ephesians the emphasis is laid on the relation between Christ and the Church. Ephesians, moreover, is eminently rich in matter of its own. The unity of the Church in all its phases, and its continuance in a redemptive dispensation of slowly developing growth and perfecting, are central and glowing thoughts; the activity of the Holy Spirit is very prominent; while the analogy between Christ's relations to the Church and that of husband and wife, the contrast between sensual and spiritual fulness, the liturgical passage in the third chapter, the elaborate description of the Christian armour, and the form of the closing benediction, are notable peculiarities.

The affinities with other New Testament scriptures are also very evident. The views of the Gentile pre-Christian life of sin, redemption through the blood of Christ, recon-

ciliation by the Cross, salvation by faith, the slaying of the enmity, the mystery of the gospel revelation, the unifying of all, especially Jews and Gentiles, in Christ, the functions of the Holy Spirit, the figures of the building and the body, with their suggestions of unity and diversity, the indwelling of Christ in the heart, the contrast between the old man and the new, the Headship of Christ, the inheritance of the saints, the death in sin and quickening again in Christ, election and predestination, the abasement of self and the magnifying of office, the opposition of light and darkness, the Church as the bride of Christ, and the donning of spiritual armour—these all have their parallels, more or less distinct, in the Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypse. The relations to the First Epistle of Peter, and to the Gospel of John, are very obvious. One cannot but think that the writer, in treating of the catholic unity of believers, must have had in his heart the very expressions of our Lord's Intercessory Prayer, perhaps heard from the lips of John himself. Peter also must have given or received influence (almost certainly the latter), though in his Epistle one is struck at once by the darker and more definite anticipation of immediate suffering among the Christians of Asia Minor.

## II.

## AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE.

We turn now to the question of authorship. The Epistle claims to be Paul's, and the ancient Church never for a moment doubted the claim.

Outside the New Testament the Epistle is admirably attested. We have very early reference to it. Two witnesses go back to the first century, Clement of Rome (*c.* 95 A.D.), and the Two Ways (Barnabas), part of the Didaché. Both use language that leads to the highest presumption of acquaintance with the Epistle. A few years later Ignatius, Hermas, and Polycarp (a disciple of St. John), make the existence a certainty for the

first or second decade of the second century. About 140 A.D. Marcion includes it in his collection of Pauline Epistles, though under another title. Thereafter Irenæus (*c.* 170 A.D.), a disciple of Polycarp, first attributes the authorship to Paul by name, and is followed by all other tradition.[1] Thus, strange to say, the Epistle so much challenged in modern times is the one most clearly testified to in the ancient Church. In the face of this testimony, most writers, whatever their view of its authorship, agree as to its early composition and reception, and the old off-hand relegation to the "middle of the second century," the favourite era of uncritical critics, is now quite discarded.

The internal study of the Epistle, however, has raised many grave questions regarding the Pauline authorship.

(A) In the first place, difficulties have been found in the language and style.

The list of words found only here is undoubtedly large:[2] but the occurrence of peculiar words is characteristic of all Paul's Epistles, and we must bear in mind that such of his writings as we possess are few in number and spread over a long period of time; the subjects of which they treat are usually special; and the writer himself is not only a man of extreme sensibility, but of great originality, fertility, and freedom. To note such verbal peculiarities, therefore, may be a matter of literary interest, but does not afford just ground for scruples as to authenticity. Besides, in the case before us, a large number of the peculiar words have to be immediately discounted. To intrude them into the question is really inept and trifling. Such are those occurring in direct or indirect quotations, others naturally called for by the singularity of the subject (*e.g.*, on the Christian armour and on Christian unity), others that are perfectly common, and many that have their cog-

[1] The original references from Barnabas to Jerome are collected by Charteris, *Canonicity*, pp. 237–242.

[2] They are reckoned at 76, of which 37 (or 35) are foreign not merely to Pauline writings but to the whole New Testament. Cf. Von Soden, *Comm.*, p. 88; Holtzmann, *Einleit.*, p. 289, and *Kritik*, pp. 100–101.

nates in previous usage, and that now differ only as different parts of speech.[1] "Lists of this kind," says Hort, "are always delusive if taken in a crude numerical fashion. He must be a very monotonous writer indeed who does not use—for the most part unconsciously use—in each of his books a certain number of words which he does not use in his other books. . . . No one doubts that the great bulk of the vocabulary of this Epistle is in accordance with Pauline usage. . . . Indeed all this evidence drawn from the mere presence or absence of words on comparison with other books of the same author, or of other authors, can never have much value unless it be copious or very peculiar, —much more so than is the case with respect to this Epistle."[2]

It is quite acknowledged that the style of the Epistle is heavy and dragging in several places, though not altogether in a fashion unparalleled in Paul's writings. There is a tendency to accumulation of epithets, a fondness for synonyms, and a drawing out of subordinate clauses, which contrast with the general vivacity and forcible brevity of Paul's earlier manner. The difference has been thus depicted, with acknowledged breadth of treatment: "We shut the Epistle to the Romans, and we open that to the Ephesians; how great is the contrast! We cannot speak here of vivacity, hardly of energy; if there is energy it is deep down below the surface. The rapid argumentative cut and thrust is gone. In its place we have a slow-moving onwards-advancing mass, like a glacier working its

[1] Cf. Zahn's analysis, *Einleit.*, i. 366–369; Hort, *Prolegomena*, pp. 154 sqq.; Oltramare, *Comm. sur les Épîtres aux Col., aux Eph., et à Phil.*, 1892, ii. 80.

[2] Hort, *loc. cit.*, pp. 155, 158. The following interesting parallel is furnished by Prof. Mahaffy, quoted by Salmon, *Introd.*, p. 419 n.: "The works of Xenophon show a remarkable variation in their vocabulary. Thus I. and II. of the *Hellenica*, which are his earliest writings, before he travelled, contain very few Ionisms, Dorisms, etc., and are written in pure Attic. His later tracts are full of un-Attic words, picked up from his changing surroundings; and, what is more curious, in each of them there are many words only used by him once; so that, on the ground of variation in diction, each single book might be, and indeed has been, rejected as non-Xenophontic."

way inch by inch down the valley. The periods are of unwieldy length; the writer seems to stagger under his load. He has weighty truths to express, and he struggles to express them—not without success, but certainly with little flexibility or ease of composition. The truths unfolded read like abstract truths, ideal verities, 'laid up in the heavens,' rather than embodying themselves in the active controversies of earth."[1]

But the delineators of this contrast—which, it should be noted, is truer of the earlier portions of Ephesians than of its close—are by no means at a loss to account for it. The cause does not necessarily lie in difference of authorship, but in difference of subject, difference of circumstances, and difference due to the special temperament of the Apostle. When Galatians was written Paul was in the thick of a great controversy, and even in Romans "the echoes of war are still in his ears." In Ephesians that excitement has died away, and new, difficult, and transcendent matter is on hand. Besides, Paul is in prison, and far from the Churches whose case is before him, and only before him by hearsay; it would not be astray to depict him worn and weary with the monotony and depression of his confinement; no longer the gladiator with his sword drawn, but "such a one as Paul the aged." Style depends very much on mood, and theme, and circumstance; and the most curious results in criticism would follow if discrepancies of manner were to regulate questions of authorship. By this method it would be easier to prove that Ivanhoe is not Scott's than that Ephesians is not Paul's; and criticism has assuredly reached the nadir of complete absurdity, when it is based on a principle whose logical issue would render it impossible ever to ascribe two books to the same pen. Questions of style, moreover, are very much a matter of opinion and of predisposition. To some this Epistle seems tame, sluggish, verbose, scholastic, phlegmatic; to others it is one of the divinest compositions of man, deep, recondite, exquisite. Perhaps Erasmus came

[1] Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, p. lv.

nearest the truth. He clearly perceived the peculiarities, yet he felt throughout the throbbing of the Pauline pulse: "Idem in hac epistola Pauli fervor, eadem profunditas, idem omnino spiritus ac pectus."

(B) Much more serious, however, have been the objections taken to the Epistle on account of its subject-matter.

1. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, critics began to assert that both Colossians and Ephesians were manifestly non-Pauline in large portions of their contents, and could not possibly belong to the apostolic age. One of the most formidable opponents was Baur, whose views were fully expressed in his famous work on Paul, first published in 1845. He attributed both Epistles to a period at earliest approaching the middle of the second century, when the clearly developed Gnosticism, which he thought pervaded them, was alone possible. "We are here transported to a circle of ideas which belongs to a totally different historical era, viz., to the period of Gnosticism."[1] The evidence of this he found in the conception and representation of Christ in absolute pre-existence, the centre of the entire spirit-realm, and the unifier of all things in heaven and earth; in the Gnostic idea of the Pleroma; the representation of the Church as a Syzygy with Christ, His Bride, Body, Pleroma; the manifold Wisdom of God; the purpose of the Æons (iii. 9); the Descent into Hell (iv. 8, so interpreted), as indicating the full extent of the activity of Christ as an absolute Pleroma; and many characteristic expressions, such as, mystery, wisdom, knowledge, æon, light, and rulers of the darkness of this world. He even found indications of Montanism (anti-Gnostic) in the representation of the Spirit as the distinctive principle of Christian consciousness and life, and in the co-ordination of prophets with apostles as founders of the Church (Tertullian): regarding which it has only to be said, with Holtzmann, that on such grounds Montanism might be discovered in all Paul's Epistles; and further, that Montanus did not come into notice in Phrygia before 156 A.D.,

[1] *Life and Works of Paul*, ii. 7.

whereas our Epistles were in Marcion's collection nearly twenty years earlier.

It is unquestionable that in both Epistles there are expressions and ideas which were common in the Gnostic systems of the second century. But it is unhistorical to assume that these were not possible at a much earlier period. Gnosticism was a composite and not an original phenomenon. It gathered up speculative notions that had long been in vogue, and allied them as far as possible with Christian redemptive conceptions, which greatly served to give it the vigour it possessed.[1] Judaism, Hellenism, Parsism, and the mythologies of Egypt and India, were all contributory streams. Very specially the Zoroastrian dualistic view of the universe, with its Powers of Light and Darkness in eternal conflict, and its doctrines of heavenly hierarchies and emanations, had a powerful fascination. Such influences were at work not merely by the second century, but even before and through the first. Hence the utter baselessness of the opinion that teaching of a Gnostic type coming into touch with Christianity, is an argument for the late date of the Epistles. As Jülicher says, "The Gnosticism with which Colossians is at strife is even older than Christianity itself." "The false teachers with whom the Epistle makes us acquainted could have made their appearance within the Christian Church in the year 60 A.D. just as easily as in 120."[2]

As matter of fact, the traditionary sources of the Talmud, the doctrines of the Essenes, the Apocryphal books of *Ecclesiasticus* and the *Wisdom of Solomon*, and the writings of Philo and the Alexandrian School, clearly show how deeply it was possible for Judaism to have

[1] The Gnostics specially adopted the Pauline teaching regarding the connection of redemption with creation, which they endeavoured to understand speculatively. Cf. Neander, *Ch. Hist.*, Bohn's ed., ii. 8. Their views of the origin of the evil from which Christ redeems were, however, radically different from those of the New Testament. The latter traces it to the human will, the Gnostics found it in the very constitution of the world.

[2] *Einleit.*, p. 105, and *Ency. Bibl.*, i. 864. Cf. also Reuss, *Hist. of the N.T. Writings*, pp. 65 sq.

intermingled not merely with Greek philosophy, but also with Oriental speculation, long before the time of Paul. The composition of the theosophical books of the Jewish Kabbala—such as the Book of Creation and the Book of Zohar—no doubt belongs to a very late period, but the Kabbalistic traditions themselves certainly "embody many opinions and doctrines which obtained among the Jews prior to the time of Christ."[1] Simonian Gnosticism, although developed in the second century, undoubtedly had its basis laid in Samaria by Simon Magus himself, "the great power of God," who was the forerunner of Gnosticism, if not its founder as all the early Fathers thought. "His system at bottom," says Renan, "has much analogous to that of Valentinus."[2]

Philo's language is particularly worth noting in connection with the Colossian and Ephesian Christology. In his writings the Divine Word is the Image of God, the Firstborn Son, "neither unbegotten as God nor begotten as man," the Maker of the World, who sums up and comprehends the whole intelligible Cosmos, who holds together and administers the universe, and is the instrument of creation and providence, the steersman and pilot of the world; while the Divine Wisdom is the unfailing fountain for the understanding, the "many-named," the beginning and image and vision of God.[3]

[1] Ginsburg, *Ency. Brit.*, xiii. 814[a]; *Dict. Chris. Biog.*, i. 363. Mansel (*Gnost. Heres.*, p. 39) sees a Persian impress. Cf. Westcott, *Study of the Gospels*, p. 144. On Gnostic speculations in Judaism antecedent to the Christian era, cf. M. Friedländer, *Der Vorchristliche jüdische Gnosticismus* (1898); and specially on the Babylonian origin of the leading ideas of Gnosticism, cf. Wilh. Anz, *Zur Frage nach dem Ursprung der Gnostizismus* (1897).

[2] On Simon, cf. Harnack, *Hist. Dogma*, i. 243–245, and art. *Ency. Brit.*; Mansel, *Gnostic Heresies*, ch. vi.; Renan, *Les Apôtres*, ch. xv., and *L'Église chrétienne*, ch. ix. "Simon appears to have taken into his studies of Greek philosophy a system of syncretic theosophy and of allegorical exegesis analogous to that of Philo" (*Les Apôtres*, p. 267). He may have been acquainted with "the theosophic ideas of the Logos," "of which we have the germ in Colossians"—an Epistle "très-probablement authentique" (p. 272).

[3] Cf. Principal Drummond's *Philo Judæus*, ii. ch. vi.; Jowett's Essay in *Thessalonians*, etc. (1894); Ueberweg's *History of Philosophy*, i. 222 sqq. On the spirit-world, the families in heaven, the angelic hierarchies, the

These influences were not isolated and confined during the first century. They were broadcast. Men in those days did not divide their lives into compartments. They travelled with their opinions, and were only too eager to discuss them, to impart them, and to find affinities with them elsewhere. Owing to the conquests of Alexander and the spread of the Roman Empire, the Eastern and Western worlds, by the time of the Apostles, had much mingled—the Orontes had emptied itself into the Tiber—and in no part was the confluence more evident and potent than just in the districts of Asia Minor to which the present Epistles are directed. Greek cities, too, like Corinth, were very open to such intercourse, and it is noteworthy that in both Paul's letters to the Corinthians we have probable allusions to germs of Gnostic teaching.[1] Nothing is more likely than that Paul himself had come into contact with many who aired speculative opinions; he must even have been familiar with them when a student in the Jewish schools; and, as a Christian evangelist, he must clearly have perceived the danger of their alliance with the doctrines of the gospel. It is easy also to believe that such contact tinged his vocabulary, and that when the danger actually arose as it now did in the Lycus valley, his thoughts were naturally set working on new and transcendental lines. It was as if he said: 'Yet show I unto you a more excellent way. There is a solution of all these problems of origin. But it is in Christ, and in Him alone. He is the Beginning and the End, the true Pleroma, the true Mediator, the Head of all Powers above and beneath, the Deliverer of the Universe.' It is, however, decidedly

heavenly places, etc., cf. ch. vi. of H. St. John Thackeray's *Relation of St. Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought*. Philo's "many-named" wisdom, πολυώνυμος, may be compared with Paul's πολυποίκιλος (Eph. iii. 10), "much-variegated," a word in which Baur thought he perceived the mark of the second century.

[1] Cf. 1 Cor. viii. 1, 2, xiii. 8, 10; 2 Cor. xi. 6. Mansel thinks that it is not improbable that Gnostic doctrines are at least partially and indirectly combated, along with errors of a similar character, in the Apostle's elaborate and triumphant argument for the resurrection of the body in the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle. *Gnost. Heresies*, p. 50.

a forced interpretation that finds in his language anything like the significance which the same terms possessed when employed in the full-blown heretical systems of the second century.

One cannot but feel, as Baur writes of the Pleroma, the Divine Wisdom, the Syzygies, the Æons, etc., that he is finding a great deal more in the Epistle than is really there. His interpretations seem forced in the interests of a preconceived theory. His Hegelian principle of development proceeding by the mediation of opposing tendencies, led him to account for the whole history of the early Church by a deep and incessant conflict of Petrine and Pauline parties, which only found a catholic settlement by compromise and conciliation well on in the second century. All writings, therefore, that were irenical rather than polemical, had to be late in their origin from the nature of the case, and the Gnostic elements in phraseology and thought are here seized upon to give colour to this conclusion. It must have been a strange way, however, to attempt to secure conciliation by the use of a system which both parties in the dispute equally abhorred. Baur undoubtedly gave an immense stimulus to thought and research, but his views on the present question are no longer accepted by scholars save in very modified forms. The opposite order is generally allowed, namely, that the Gnostics of the second century were more likely to be the borrowers from the canonical writings.[1]

2. Although Gnostical references by no means suffice to relegate the Epistle to the second century, there is still, in view of the subject-matter and its treat-

[1] Cf. Holtzmann, *Kritik der Epheser- und Kolosserbriefe*, p. 302. "The New Testament ideas are the sources of the later Gnostic systems, which on their part cannot be regarded as original creations: the Gnostic σοφία, for example, is a development of Rom. xi. 33; 1 Cor. ii. 6, 7; Eph. iii. 10." Cf. also Reuss, *Hist. N.T.*, pp. 116–117, and 124–126. "It seems clear," says Lightfoot, writing of the adaptations of Valentinians, "that in several instances at least their nomenclature was originally chosen for the sake of fitting the theory to isolated phrases and expressions of the Apostolic writings, however much it might conflict with the Apostolic doctrine in its main lines" (*Colossians*, p. 269).

ment, a large consensus of opinion in favour of a date in the last quarter of the first century, which may be described as the Johannine rather than the Pauline period.

To begin with, considerable difficulty is felt in attributing to Paul the personal passage at the opening of the third chapter. Holtzmann, Weizsäcker, and others, are of opinion that the hand of another writer is here clearly betrayed. The passage certainly insists strongly on Paul's special knowledge and qualification in dealing with the mystery of the gospel; and there is a peculiarity in the fourth verse, which would in some degree be relieved if Hort's interpretation, already referred to, could be accepted.[1] As to the inclusion of the Apostles as in full agreement with the reception of the Gentiles, it is really in essential harmony with the facts,[2] and could only be an anachronism if we were to maintain that the early debates were not got over nor the breaches healed in the lifetime of St. Paul—a view that has no justification or likelihood.[3] On the whole the magnifiying of his office, accompanied with lowly personal abasement, as in verse 8, in view of the Divine grace bestowed upon him, is quite in the Apostle's mode,[4] and is very germane to his present purpose of commending his authority to unknown Gentile readers, in whose interests he is even now in bonds. Taken alone, such difficulty as the passage presents would never warrant a conclusion adverse to Pauline authorship, although naturally it gathers force when used cumulatively along with other evidence.

The weightiest objection, however, is taken on the ground of a clearly defined development, both in doctrine and in ecclesiastical situation, presented by the Epistle.

[1] *Vide supra*, p. 340 n.

[2] The right hand of fellowship is already given in the account of Galatians ii.

[3] It is scarcely logical to represent Paul as in deep and perpetual conflict with the Apostles, when it is abundantly clear that he was particular to count himself among them.

[4] Cf. Gal. i. 13–16.

The chief matters have reference (1) to the Person and Work of Christ, and (2) to catholic or universal conceptions of the Church.

(1) It has to be premised that it is scarcely maintained that the new views are essentially inconsistent with genuine Pauline teaching. They are almost unanimously regarded as a natural development, not un-Pauline but non-Pauline, due most likely, so close is their affinity to the Apostle's acknowledged thought, to one who was an ardent disciple if not a personal friend. This reduces the issue to very narrow limits. It also makes it more difficult to decide, because the question tends to resolve itself into a matter of opinion. It is a crude supposition that Paul in his earlier Epistles has told us all that was in his mind at the time. He too, like his Master, could have said, and practically did say, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."[1] It is quite as erroneous to suppose that his mind remained stationary during five or ten most stirring and eventful years. The dictum that this or that "goes beyond Pauline limits," should certainly be used with caution and reserve. A man "led by the Spirit" may very rapidly come to see and to teach, not really differently, but more. Given the circumstances that would naturally call forth vaster conceptions, it would be the hardest of all things to maintain that Paul was not equal to them. Events and ideas move *pari passu*. Thus, to touch the facts for a moment, if the Apostle does not now strenuously discuss the right of the Gentiles to free admission to the kingdom on the ground of faith alone, surely it is simply because he has not hitherto laboured in vain. Their admission is a realised fact, and it is perfectly futile to attempt to pin Paul down for ever to a battle against Jewish ceremonialism. Much may happen in a "ten years' conflict." In this case it is very conceivable that victory has happened, and not long happened, if we rightly interpret the glad wonder with which the writer regards it.

[1] Cf. 1 Cor. iii. 1–2.

The Christology of Ephesians is fundamentally the same as that of Colossians. The pre-existence of Christ is implied, and the cosmical issues are identical. Believers are chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world, and in Him as Head all things both in heaven and on earth are gathered into one. This is certainly not the early antithesis between the First and Second Adam. Yet it is far from being its contradiction. Even in 1 Cor. xv. 47 "the Second Man is the Lord from heaven"; and in Gal. iv. 4 and Rom. viii. 3 the Father's "sending" of His Son into the world, is represented in such a way as to suggest that the Apostle did not simply think of Christ as absolutely coming into existence at His human birth. The language in 2 Cor. viii. 9 is quite clear: "Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor." The cosmical significance of Christ, moreover, has not merely its germ but its evident expression in the words of 1 Cor. viii. 6: "One Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him." What we have, therefore, in the later Epistles, is simply a more definite and extended presentation of thoughts that were not foreign to the Apostle from the beginning. And the historical circumstances are quite adequate to account for this presentation. Paul had tidings from Asia Minor of a dangerous form of teaching that was most possible and probable in his time, and the news was perfectly sufficient to draw from him such a line of evangelical defence as we find in the Captivity Epistles. A similar explanation may be given regarding the new aspects of the Redeemer's work. The matter is carried into the universal sphere because the Colossian speculations invited it thither. Moreover, old modes of statement naturally drop into a subsidiary position, not because they are untrue, but because they do not meet so clearly the new necessities. This is the reason why the earlier watchwords of Justification by Faith are not prominent. They did not need to be. Yet all the time they are absent rather in word than in idea. In the views of sin, faith, good works, and the Christian life, it is acknowledged, there is no departure from the standpoint

of Paul.[1] The Cross still remains the 'centre of gravity,' and the historical Christ is held fast even when the cosmical is most revealed: the ground of redemption is the blood of the Beloved, and the Christ who is the exalted and universal Head is the Christ who died and rose again. Even if the Son is now represented as doing what has formerly been attributed to God Himself, reconciling and giving gifts, yet there is no essential contradiction of earlier views of the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Thess. i. 1–2), and the extension of function and activity is quite in harmony with the enlarged conceptions of His Person. Nor should we omit to observe, on the other hand, that along with this the note of subordination of the Son to the Father is quite distinct (i. 3 and 17), while there is a significant variation of the relation in iv. 32 and v. 1, 2. On the whole, therefore, the opinion is justifiable that while the Christology of Colossians and Ephesians is an advance, it is no greater an advance than the historical circumstances make natural and consistent for St. Paul himself.

(2) The doctrine regarding the Church is the leading doctrine of the Epistle, and here also it is maintained that there is a development such as precludes the theory of Pauline authorship. Reference is chiefly made to four matters—the teaching on the catholic or universal character of the Church; its relation to Christ; its apostolic foundation; and its continuance through the ages.

(*a*) It is true that the Church is a term here used in the very widest sense, universally inclusive of all believers. This is supposed to be the mark of a later time, though some, as Renan, reduce the difference on this account to the almost negligible margin of ten or fifteen years. It is certain the usage here is not so late as that of Ignatius and Polycarp, nor are there any tokens that it is due to a desire on the part of Christianity to draw itself together in the face of external opposition and persecution. The

[1] Cf. Pfleiderer, *Paulinism*, ii. 183, 189; Oltramare, *Comm.*, ii. 88, 98; Sabatier, *Paul*, p. 239.

origin is altogether more primitive. It is suggested by the simple fact that the writer happily perceives Jews and Gentiles becoming united in one fold, on the ground of a common reconciliation to God in Christ. Its basis is therefore essentially universal—a universal salvation for mankind who are in universal need of it, a distinctly Pauline conception. Nor is the writer thinking of an organised unity of different Churches scattered here and there throughout the world. The solidarity in his mind is one to be secured among believing men irrespective of race, by bonds that are spiritual and invisible, the grand aim being a unity of faith and knowledge. This thought indeed, as Oltramare puts it, is not so much the unity of the Church as unity *in* the Church. It is difficult to see how such a purely spiritual conception must have lain beyond the range of the Apostle. In point of fact, he has not hitherto confined himself to a use of the word in an exclusively local sense. He has already spoken, in 1 Corinthians and Galatians, of the Church of God, referring to the communities he persecuted before his conversion. Moreover, in the last verses of Romans he speaks, quite in the manner of Ephesians, of the mystery of the gospel now to be made known to all nations. Circumstances also make the inclusive and general aspect a very natural one to the Apostle. He is led to reflect on the historical fact that now in many parts of the world the great dividing line that hitherto separated humanity—for to the Jewish mind there was only one line of religious demarcation among men—has been abolished, and that, from both sides, Jews and Gentiles come together on common ground that is neither Jewish nor Gentile but Christian. And as he reflects, he recognises an eternal counsel of God, glorious and worthy, now beginning to be realised, even the gathering together of all in Christ. This is the natural counterpart of the great doctrine with which his mind is filled, namely, the transcendent Personality of the Redeemer. And the use made of the idea is eminently characteristic of St. Paul. Who more likely than he to perceive at once the immense spiritual and ethical value of such a conception?

Once grasped, it offered the highest impulse to mutual love among believers, and to a holy life in the world. It is a high calling wherewith they are called; let them walk worthily of it. If this be not Paul, it is similitude on the very borders of identity. Nor ought we to forget an influence that may have contributed to the shaping of this catholic conception in Paul's mind, namely, his presence in Rome. He must have felt something of the imperial air of his surroundings, and have been impressed with the wondrous sense of world-wide interest involved in the simple fact of Roman citizenship. "Here he must have been vividly reminded of the already existing unity which comprehended both Jew and Gentile under the bond of subjection to the Emperor at Rome, and similarity and contrast alike would suggest that a truer unity bound together in one society all believers in the Crucified Lord."[1]

(*b*) Little can be made of the peculiar relation of the Church to the Headship of Christ as an idea at all likely to be foreign to the mind of Paul in the circumstances which the Epistle supposes. Criticism here resolves itself into a fastidious and puerile hair-splitting about metaphors. Because in Romans Paul spoke of believers as a complete body, with Christ as the uniting principle, it would be inconsistent for him now, several years later, to speak of believers as the trunk of a body, which has Christ for its head![2] One may be excused from entering on such a discussion. As a serious allegation against Pauline authorship the objection is perfectly grotesque. It is much more important to notice that the Church is now, in virtue of her relation to Christ, represented as the

[1] Hort, *Christian Ecclesia*, p. 144; cf. also Lock, *Paul the Master Builder*, pp. 43–44.

[2] Dr. Cone, *e.g.*, says that the idea of the Headship cannot be combined with the earlier representation without confusing the Apostle's entire construction of the matter. *Paul the Man, the Missionary, and the Teacher*, p. 414 n. But it is not necessary to strive after such a ruinous combination of long separated metaphors. There might be some small amount of force in the objection if the figurative incongruity had appeared in one and the same Epistle.

Pleroma of Christ, who Himself in Colossians was the Pleroma of God. The expression is new and bold. We understand it to mean that the Church is to be so united to Christ, and so open towards Him, that she will ultimately be filled with the perfect fulness of all His grace and power.

(*c*) It is further thought that the association of Apostles and prophets as founders of the Church, is not a mode of speech that Paul was likely to employ, and that still less likely, on general and personal grounds, was he to call them "holy." Many have felt a special difficulty with regard to the latter part of this objection, and it has even been suggested that the expression must be a gloss on the text.[1] But Paul has not hesitated to plead a great deal on behalf of the "saints" in Jerusalem, and the expression is freely applied to believers throughout his Epistles. It does not in fact specially express veneration on account of superior sanctity, but is simply used to distinguish those who have received the Divine message of the gospel. It is perfectly natural as applied to those who have at least consecrated themselves to a holy ideal, and who have been led thereto by the Holy Spirit. Paul would probably have hesitated to apply the word individually and directly to himself; but such a feeling is covered so as scarcely to operate when the application is to the whole body of those who had been chosen as the recipients of Divine revelation. It is true the Apostles and prophets are represented, in a pleased and almost retrospective way, as the foundation of the Church, with Jesus Christ as the chief corner-stone. But there is nothing in this of the nature of vital contradiction to previous representations.[2] We have only a figurative statement of actual fact as regards the mission-

[1] In 1 Thess. v. 27, in the phrase "holy brethren," the adjective is a gloss from the margin.

[2] Not even to "other foundation can no man lay," etc., 1 Cor. iii. 11. As Hort says in his admirable treatment of this objection—"There he is not speaking of the Christian society, but the Christian faith: what is there spoken of as built on the foundation is not men but teachings or ways of life" (*Prolegomena*, p. 147).

ary work of the apostolic age, and a simple recognition of those who were ever in the front rank of the Divine gifts bestowed on the Church. Moreover, the comparison of the Messiah to the Headstone of the corner, the indispensable bond of the building, though actually new in Paul's writings, was quite common property in the religious thought of his time, adopted by our Lord in one of His parables, and used by Peter both before the Sanhedrim and in his Epistle.

(*d*) The last point of importance to which exception is taken in connection with the doctrine of the Church, is the teaching regarding its continuance through the ages. This is believed to be inconsistent with the Pauline anticipation of the Parousia and approaching end of the age, characteristic of the earlier Epistles. But even before the period of Captivity we have intimation that the logic of events was having its effect on the Apostle's mind. In this respect Paulinism had begun to 'fade' even in the Epistle to the Romans. There, as we have already seen, there was an evident anticipation of an extended evangelical dispensation and an age-long development. Growing years and experience had only made this anticipation more sure.

So far, therefore, as subject-matter is concerned, we can scarcely think that a sufficiently strong case has been made out against the Pauline authorship. We have presented what may fairly be regarded as at least the main lines of criticism.[1] But the Epistle has been studied with great minuteness, and many additional details of greater or less plausibility have been urged against it. Such are, its theory of marriage, its forbidding of theft, the unusual form of the final salutation, the supposed implication that the earthly Jerusalem has been destroyed (ii. 6), the signs of a developed sectarianism (iv. 3–14), the Divine characteristics in i. 17 and iii. 15, the catalogue of social duties,

[1] Specially worthy of study and comparison are Pfleiderer (*Paulinism*) and Hort (*Prolegomena to Romans and Ephesians*), who write respectively against and for the Pauline authorship.

the code of commandments for different classes, the depreciation of circumcision and uncircumcision, the arbitrary use of a passage from the Psalms (iv. 8), and the authority given to an Old Testament promise in vi. 3.

But there is a good deal of questionable exegesis about these details, and in some of them the text is manifestly charged with more than it can bear. Oltramare truly says that many of the charges, when examined in their context, are seen to be due to very exaggerated scruples, and in reality more frequently bear witness to the originality and authenticity of the Epistle.[1] Regarding the somewhat narrow and arbitrary grounds on which a good deal of the allegation of un-Paulinism is based, Dr. Sanday makes a very forcible protest in writing on Colossians: "There ought to be a clearer understanding as to the nature of the disproof of genuineness both in thought and expression. It is not a sound method to take certain standard documents and to say all that cannot be paralleled out of these documents is interpolation. It is not to be supposed that a writer of so much originality as St. Paul would simply go on writing in a circle and repeating himself. . . . The onus probandi certainly lies on the side of the critic, whose duty it is, as Von Soden rightly urges, not 'to leave nothing but what is undoubtedly Pauline,' but rather 'to remove nothing but what is decidedly un-Pauline.' There is a broad distinction between these two positions — a distinction which really covers the greater part of the matter in dispute."[2]

(C) We now come to the last stumbling-block to the authenticity of the Epistle—its relation to Colossians.

This is certainly one of the most complex literary problems in the study of the New Testament. The nature of the resemblances and differences between the two Epistles has been already pointed out (see p. 343). The problem is to account for their combination.

[1] *Comm.* ii. 102–103 n.

[2] Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, 2nd ed., 1893, vol. i. pt. i. p. 626a.

Three theories have to be considered.

1. Paul, after writing Colossians, may have entrusted the composition of Ephesians to a disciple—Timothy or Tychicus—to be carried out under his eye and in his name.

2. In Colossians we have a primitive document, which a later writer has used, partly from sympathy with its teaching, and partly, by identifying himself with the Apostle, to secure authority for teaching of his own.

There are several modifications of this second theory. Many who accept Colossians as entirely authentic, simply regard Ephesians as a pseudonymous writing of the next generation, based almost entirely on Colossians, and the work of an able and ardent disciple who quite honourably, according to the custom of his own and preceding times, sought to apply to the needs of his age such arguments and appeals as he could conceive his master himself would have used.

But others find Colossians only in part authentic. According to Holtzmann, the original Pauline nucleus is scattered through the Epistle, and amounts only to about forty-one verses; all the rest is interpolation.[1] Recent scholarship on his own lines, however, has greatly reversed his conclusions. Thus Von Soden finds Colossians wholly authentic, with the exception of eight verses and a half.[2] Hausrath, Pfleiderer, and Mangold express their approval of the main lines of Holtzmann's work, but no writer has during thirty years adopted his findings in their entirety. Pfleiderer indeed differs totally from him as to the authorship of the interpolations in Colossians, being strongly of opinion that the identity of the interpolator with the writer of Ephesians is a view absolutely to be excluded. Holtzmann is quite as persuaded that the interpolator of Colossians and the author of Ephesians were one and the same man.[3] As further illustrating the apparent impossibility

[1] *Kritik der Epheser- und Kolosserbriefe*, pp. 148 sqq.

[2] These excluded verses are i. 15–20, ii. 10, 15, 18 (partly, *i.e.* from θέλων to ἐμβατεύων), *Hand-Comm.*, p. 3.

[3] Pfleiderer, *Paulinism*, ii. 165 n.; Holtzmann, *Einleitung*, p. 295.

of agreement when the authenticity is denied, Pfleiderer, it may be noted, thinks the interpolation of Colossians preceded the composition of Ephesians, while Von Soden regards it as subsequent.[1]

3. The third theory is that the writer of both Epistles was the same man, writing at almost the same time to Churches whose circumstances were very similar. If Colossians be Pauline, Ephesians accordingly goes with it to the same source. If not, the burden of proof has to be taken to show that neither is Pauline.

The first theory, that of composition by an amanuensis —Timothy or Tychicus—who had Colossians before him, was originally suggested by Schleiermacher, and had the approval of Ewald and Renan, but is now virtually discarded. It is scarcely consistent with the frequent emphatic use of the first person,[2] and the absence of a second name in the address which was so much Paul's custom; nor can we readily think that in subject-matter so original, and of such universal Christian interest and importance, the Apostle would be content to leave the work to the hand of an assistant. Moreover, if "under his eye and in his name" mean that he virtually dictated the thought and expression to his disciple, the theory is superfluous. It is probable that most of his letters were written so. "Qui facit per alium facit per se."

The only question which really deeply divides scholars is whether the relation between the two Epistles is one of identity of authorship, or of dependence and imitation.

One valuable result of Holtzmann's patient comparison of the Epistles, is to establish the fact that it is impossible to set up the one Epistle as having greater claims to originality than the other. When the parallel passages are carefully contrasted, the cases in which priority seems due to Colossians are exactly counterbalanced by an equal number of cases in which priority seems as decidedly due

[1] *Hand-Comm.*, p. 3.

[2] In i. 15, iii. 1–13, vi. 19–22. Cf. Von Soden, *Hand-Comm.*, p. 88.

to Ephesians.[1] If, therefore, we cannot justly say that the one is dependent on the other, the presumption against an imitative authorship is very strong.

The more the obvious resemblances[2] of the Epistles are studied, word compared with word and phrase with phrase, the more students appear to be oppressed by a kind of linguistic nightmare. In the intense inspection of verbal coincidences, they grow incapable of perceiving the wood for the trees. The general judgment would seem to be that an imitator must have been at work because it is inconceivable that Paul should have repeated himself so closely. This is a merely subjective and arbitrary opinion. It also tests the Apostle by a criterion which in his time did not exist. Paul was a preacher rather than a writer, and this is often quite forgotten. He was no litterateur in the modern sense, and was not likely to be affected by any fastidious hesitancy as to words and phrases. He had no thought of either literary blemish or merit, and it is quite clear that the sensitive dread of self-repetition did not affect him in writing Romans after Galatians, or Philippians after Romans. Even if, on a probable hypothesis, he meant the two letters to be interchanged, no difficulty would present itself to him on that account. He would simply be aware of what is sufficiently apparent — the general diversity of aim in the two Epistles, and the need of the one to supplement the other. It would certainly

[1] Priority is attributed to Ephesians in seven parallels, and again to Colossians also in seven. *Kritik*, pp. 46–83.

| Priority of Ephesians. | | Priority of Colossians. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (1) Eph. i. 4. | Col. i. 22. | (1) Col. i. 1–2. | Eph. i. 1–2. |
| (2) i. 6, 7. | i. 13, 14. | (2) i. 3–5, 9. | i. 15–18. |
| (3) iii. 3, 5, 9. | i. 26, ii. 2. | (3) i. 5. | i. 3, 12, 13. |
| (4) iii. 17, 18. iv. 16. ii. 20. | i. 23, ii. 2, 7. | (4) i. 25, 29. | iii. 2, 7. |
| | | (5) ii. 4–8. | iv. 17–21. |
| (5) iv. 16. | ii. 19. | (6) iv. 5. | v. 15, 16. |
| (6) iv. 22–24. | iii. 9, 10. | (7) iv. 6. | iv. 29. |
| (7) v. 19. | iii. 16. | | |

[2] According to S. Davidson, "out of the 155 verses contained in our Epistle, 78 contain expressions identical with those in the Colossian letter" (*Introduction*, ed. 1894, ii. 276).

be the merest pedantry for a man—even the most modern —to say that he could not bear to read Ephesians after Colossians because it is too painfully similar. Zahn relates that he once heard Bismarck speak twice on the same day, with only a brief interval between the speeches. The first speech was addressed to a small body of Professors, and the other to a large gathering of between four and five thousand students. In spite of the fact that there were words and phrases and even whole sentences the same, and that there was much similarity in the general groundwork of the speeches, yet there was such variation on the whole, so great a change of environment and tone, that no man felt a bit less willing to listen to the second speech than to the first.[1]

In point of fact, the parallels themselves reveal significant differences. The repetitions are not in the manner of a cautious and scrupulous imitation; words and phrases are rather handled with a perfect mastery, sometimes in totally different connections, and in developing different lines of thought.[2] Paley correctly expressed the matter when he wrote: "Although an impostor might transcribe into a forgery entire sentences and phrases, yet the dislocation of words, the partial recollection of phrases and sentences, the intermixture of new terms and new ideas with terms and ideas before used, which are the natural properties of writings produced under the circumstances in which these Epistles are represented to have been composed—would not, I think, have occurred to the invention of a forger; nor, if they had occurred would they have been so easily executed. This studied variation was a refinement in forgery which I believe did not exist."[3]

There are also other considerations that make it difficult to believe in an imitator writing in a later age. There is no consistency in the various conceptions of him. In many respects, and these often very difficult, such as

[1] *Einleitung*, i. 364.

[2] Cf. Reuss, *Hist. N.T. Writings*, p. 110; Oltramare, *Comm.*, ii. 113 sqq.; Weiss, *Introduction*, i. 349 n.

[3] *Horæ Paulinæ*, ch. vi. 1, 2.

subtle and intricate reproductions of Paul's modes of thought and expression, he is Pauline; and in other respects, according to much of the negative criticism, he is amazingly un-Pauline, not only guilty of glaring anachronisms, but taking very odd liberties,[1] and giving evident token of his hand, even when he most elaborately tries to conceal it (iii. 1–8). The two things do not harmonise. They present us with an almost incredible mixture of extreme skill and extreme stupidity. Moreover, we can scarcely think his own and the succeeding age so absolutely uncritical as to have detected none of the discrepancies which are now seen to loom so conspicuously on the page. If the Gnosticism, for example, be so very pronounced as to be quite impossible for St. Paul, then not only was the pseudonymity veiled in a very bungling manner, but it could not possibly have escaped the notice of the Fathers who never spared a Gnostic when they found him. Some protest might have been expected, at least from Colosse, if, as on Holtzmann's theory, its cherished Epistle was so freely interpolated, and handed round the Christian world in so false and garbled a form. Still further, the first business of an imitator is to imitate, and yet here the very points he should almost certainly have repeated are those most conspicuously absent. Such obvious usages as the association of a companion in the address, personal salutations, and touches here and there of local colour, would surely have been reproduced. If it be said that the writer was only consistent in this to the general encyclical cast he meant to give to the Epistle, yet he has not followed the form so far as we have it from Paul in Galatians and 2 Corinthians. Least of all would such an explanation be valid for those who, with Holtzmann, assert that it was not Paul's habit to write circular letters at all. In that case the imitator is in a worse plight than ever.

[1] *E.g.*, as Weiss (*Introd.*, i. 348 n.) justly says, the reference to Tychicus in vi. 21 would be more likely to give offence than to lend the appearance of genuineness to his composition.

On the whole we cannot resist the conclusion that the theory of single authorship is the simplest and most natural solution of the difficulty raised by the combination of differences and resemblances between the two Epistles. Baur's instinct was not wrong in this respect, and Weizsäcker, and Holtzmann (to the full extent of the interpolations) give weight to the same view. Similar expressions were very likely to spring to the pen of a man writing to neighbouring Churches at a time when his mind was dominated by certain new and peculiar conceptions. In both Epistles the doctrinal materials with which he works are the same, but the general aims are different. In the one he sets forth the unique supremacy of Christ in universal redemption; and in the other he dwells on the corollary of that, the absolute dependence of the redeemed Body on its ever-living Head. Yet these themes are manifestly so closely allied that it is quite natural to find their treatment crossing.

Baur was of opinion that the kindred matter of the Epistles was divided between them according to positive intention. This undoubtedly points to their true relation. The one is supplementary to the other. Colossians is one magnificent segment of the doctrinal circle, but the circle is not completed till its sister Epistle is written. It may be a matter of surprise, however, that the false teaching so clearly referred to in the one Epistle is almost out of sight in the other. It is quite possible that the trouble, when Paul heard of it, was in its extreme form distinctly localised, and that a sense both of delicacy and of justice would forbid reference to it where its existence was not alleged. At the same time, although the heresy be not directly mentioned in Ephesians, it is perhaps a mistake to think that there are no signs whatever of its influence. Not the least certain of its evils would be dispeace in church and family life, disturbance to the faith, unruliness and disintegration. In the earnest warnings and counsels of the Epistle, it is permissible to recognise its presence in spirit if not in letter. Once more, it is the natural consequence of general change of standpoint in Ephesians that

leads to the prominence given to the Holy Spirit there. In speaking of the Church practically striving to reach its high calling in Christ, it was impossible to escape frequent reference to the inner principle and inspiration of its life. Finally, if the two Epistles are to be regarded as from the same hand, decision as to whether that hand were Paul's depends on such questions of external and internal evidence as those with which we have already dealt.

The conclusion to which our study points is that a late origin for the Epistle has not been made out. From the nature of the case it is impossible to prove to demonstration that it is Paul's, and it is always easy to say that the most characteristic Pauline marks are simply due to clever imitation.[1] On the other hand, the negative opinion is certainly not proven. Nothing that has been alleged against the Apostle's authorship appeals with self-evident or decisive force. A very great deal rather seems pettifogging to a degree. One has often reason to be surprised at the trivial points which a scholarly and ingenious opposition has thought it worth while to raise. To our mind it seems that the early universal testimony to the Epistle ought to weigh far more than it does. Modern criticism brushes it too cavalierly aside. The Church of the first age undoubtedly cherished her literary treasures very carefully and jealously, and it is quite unaccountable, if the case be as strong as some would have it, that no whisper should have arisen against the Epistle until the third decade of the nineteenth century. The general harmony of tone and teaching with admittedly Pauline and other apostolic writings, surely makes it much simpler to receive the Epistle as the work of the Apostle than to

[1] "Criticism," says Wace, "which at one moment uses differences to prove that an Epistle is not St. Paul's, and at another uses resemblances to show that it was the work of an imitator, is too hard to please to be worth much consideration" (Introduction to Pastoral Epistles in *Speaker's Comm.*, p. 758[b]). It must be confessed that there is (if the expression be permissible) a little too much of the "Heads I win, Tails you lose" principle in a great deal of the negative criticism. At the same time, apologists have to take heed lest the reproach be justly turned upon themselves.

attribute it to some great Unknown in the unfertile age of Barnabas and Clement. Among those by whom Colossians is accepted as genuine, Ephesians is entitled to considerable presumption in its favour on account of the marked affinities between them; nor ought it to be forgotten that the short Epistle to Philemon, which few contest and fewer still interpret allegorically,[1] gives weighty support of a natural and historical kind to its companion Epistles. The glad wonder also with which the inclusion of Jews and Gentiles in a common fold is regarded, seems much more likely to be the mark of an early than of a late age. Finally, if the Epistle came after the outburst of Imperial persecution and the Fall of Jerusalem, it is almost inconceivable that there should not be even the shadow of a reference to events full of such dire consequences to both Jewish and Gentile Christians. All in all, Principal Robertson's conclusion seems highly justifiable: "We accept the Epistle's own account of its authorship, supported by the unanimous testimony of antiquity, and uncontradicted by any decisive test, or by the claims of any equally probable theory of its origin."[2]

## III.

## DESTINATION OF THE EPISTLE.

Who were intended to be the recipients of the Epistle? When this question is raised, several subjects emerge of the deepest interest to a student of the New Testament. He has to examine the title, the text that contains the address, and the general tenor and contents of the Epistle. If he has come to the conclusion that he may accept the Epistle as genuinely Pauline, he will now have to consider whether,

[1] "Its allegorical character," says Weizsäcker (*Apos. Age*, ii. 245), "is at once apparent in the name Onesimus"—one of the commonest of slave names! The biography of any one whose name happens to be figurative might be resolved into allegory on this principle.

[2] Art. in Smith's *Bible Dict.*, 1893, pp. 963–964.

or with what qualifications, the generally received title can stand as correct.

The titles of the New Testament writings cannot be regarded as parts of the original documents. Any authority they have is entirely due to tradition.[1] Now, our Epistle bears the title "To the Ephesians," as far back as we have any knowledge of it. We never find it without its title; within the bosom of the Church the testimony is absolutely unanimous—*semper, ubique, et ab omnibus.* The only exception of any kind is that Marcion (140 A.D.), in his collection of Paul's Epistles, entitles it "To the Laodiceans." Beyond this no one seems to have called in question the ascription to the Ephesians. Marcion's testimony at the same time favours the great antiquity of the received title, for, as he is said to have *changed* it, it must have been in existence within the period of seventy years or so that separated his collection from the time of Paul's captivity. So far, therefore, as tradition goes—the *veritas ecclesiæ*, which was the final court of appeal with the Fathers—the testimony could not be stronger. Doubt and difficulty arise only when we come to consider the text of the address (i. 1), and the tone and contents of the Epistle.

1. The text of the address. The ordinary reading in i. 1 is, "to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus." This is perfectly in accordance with Paul's manner of address, but critical editions of the text now either omit the words "at Ephesus," or enclose them in brackets as uncertain.

For this critical change there are very strong reasons, consisting chiefly of (1) the testimony of certain of the most ancient manuscripts, and (2) inferences drawn from interpretations and statements of the Fathers.

(1) The oldest and best manuscripts we possess are the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, both belonging to the fourth

[1] Cf. Westcott and Hort, *N.T. in Greek*, ii. 321: "Their ultimate authority is traditional, not documentary. In employing them according to universal custom, we neither affirm nor question their accuracy in respect of authorship or destination."

century.[1] The former is jealously preserved in the Papal Library at Rome, and has been very little submitted to the inspection of Protestant scholars.[2] It does not contain the words "at Ephesus" in the text, although these words are written in small uncials in the margin, by the first hand, as some think, but by the second according to Tischendorf (1847), who was granted various brief opportunities of examination. The Codex Sinaiticus was brought by Tischendorf from the monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai in 1859, and is now in St. Petersburg. It also omits the words in question, though they have been supplied by a later, probably the third, hand. A similar witness for the omission of the words is found in a correction (the second hand) which expunges them from Codex (67), preserved at Vienna. This Codex is variously dated between the ninth century and the twelfth, but its corrections, according to Hort, are taken from a manuscript of great excellence, and one quite different from those already cited.[3] On the other hand, all the remaining Greek manuscripts, and all the early Versions, read "at Ephesus."

(2) The testimony of the Fathers is exceedingly interesting. The first witness is Tertullian (150–220). He wrote against Marcion about the year 208, that is, about sixty-eight years after the date usually assigned to Marcion's collection of Paul's writings. He charges Marcion with changing the *title*, so as to read, not "To the Ephesians," but "To the Laodiceans."[4] It is in all

[1] Nestle and others think Sinaiticus more probably belongs to the beginning of the fifth century. *Textual Criticism*, pp. 53–55.

[2] Cf. the accounts given by Scrivener (*Introduction to the Criticism of the N. T.*) of the experiences of Tischendorf and Alford. Leo XIII., however, caused a photographic reproduction to be issued in 1890. Cf. Swete, *Introduction to O. T. in Greek*, p. 127.

[3] *Prolegomena*, p. 75. Similarly Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, p. 380.

[4] In *Adv. Marcion*, v. 11, Tertullian writes: "Prætereo hic et de alia epistula, quam nos ad Ephesios præscriptam habemus, hæretici vero ad Laodicenos." A little later, in v. 17, he says: "Ecclesiæ quidem veritate epistulam istam ad Ephesios habemus emissam, non ad Laodicenos, sed Marcion ei titulum aliquando interpolare gestiit, quasi et in isto diligentissimus explorator. Nihil autem de titulis interest, cum ad omnes apostolus scripserit, dum ad quosdam."

likelihood to be understood that he does not refer to the text of the address but to the title in the strict sense[1]—the inscription at the head of the Epistle. He does not think 'titles' are in themselves subjects of the highest interest, but he claims for this one what he thinks should overwhelm a heretic—the universal tradition of the Church; and he also sarcastically suggests that Marcion had no better reason for his change than a desire to appear as "a most diligent investigator." Now, if Tertullian could have pointed to the words "at Ephesus" in the text, this is not the kind of language he would have employed. He would have given a harder stroke than is implied in an ironical phrase. He would have charged Marcion with falsifying the document, and he would have produced the text that would have covered him with confusion. He did not because he could not, and the only inference we can draw is that at this very early period neither he nor Marcion had the words "at Ephesus" in their copies.

The next witness is Origen (185–254). His commentary on Ephesians is lost, but, while he regarded the Epistle as to the Ephesians, an extract has been preserved which directly cites his interpretation of the text of the address, from which it appears that he cannot have had the words "at Ephesus" before him in the first verse.[2] For in his interpretation he seeks the meaning of a proposition that evidently does not contain such words, namely, "to the saints *who are* and faithful in Christ Jesus." He gives the words, "who are" an absolute or transcendental sense, as if the saints, in virtue of their union with God, now shared absolute existence with Him who called Himself to Moses "I AM." He also quotes in support of such a usage Paul's own language about God choosing the things that are not to bring to naught the things that are. Following Origen comes Basil, Bishop in Cappadocia (330–379). Neither can he have read "at Ephesus," for he

[1] But cf. Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, p. 382 and note 3.

[2] Cf. the quotation in Charteris, *Canonicity*, p. 241. The extract is given in more extended form by Oltramare, *Comm.*, ii. 11–12.

agrees with the metaphysical interpretation of "his predecessors," and cites his text, appealing to the testimony of "the oldest manuscripts," which he professes to have examined. This last statement indicates a comparison with more recent manuscripts, whose testimony was evidently beginning to run in favour of the insertion of a local name, so that Basil was compelled to defend his interpretation in the way he does. Finally, Jerome (*c.* 420), in his commentary on the Epistle, refers to the abstract interpretation of i. 1 as an unnecessary refinement, and approves of the more simple rendering which finds a reference to the Ephesians. He is thinking of Origen's difficulty, because evidently the inclusion of the local name has now become common, and is approved as the obvious and natural reading.[1]

This testimony seems pretty clear: our oldest manuscripts are without the words "at Ephesus," and we have evidence from different writers that other manuscripts in the third century, and even early in the second, did not contain them. It is only in the fourth century that the disputed words begin regularly to appear, most likely because it was felt, not merely that the title and Pauline analogies suggested them, but that without them it was impossible to give the passage any satisfactory sense. And this is the very general opinion of modern scholars. At the same time, it is scarcely fair to say that the Greek is absolutely incapable of a rational explanation without such words. Origen was certainly a Platonist, but he also understood Greek; and at least some moderns are quite willing to accept the text as he had it, and to make the best of it. Bengel, Stier, Credner, Weiss, Milligan, are of this number. Milligan even thinks the rendering as difficult *with* "at Ephesus" as without it.[2] Various translations have been adopted. Weiss is of opinion that the rendering should be "saints (*i.e.* of the old or Jewish

[1] Jerome's language, however, is not quite free from ambiguity, and at best his evidence in favour of early omission, leaning as it does on Origen's interpretation, can scarcely be regarded as independent.

[2] Art. in *Ency. Brit.*, viii. 459 n.

covenant) who are also believers in Christ Jesus"—thus making the readers in the main Jewish converts, which it is plain they were not. Credner renders, "To the saints who are at the same time true believers," that is, in the Pauline sense, although Paul would surely never have made such a distinction, especially in an Epistle with the unifying aim of the present one. Even Westcott and Hort say, "Nor is it in itself improbable that he should write 'to the saints who are also faithful (believing) in Christ Jesus.'"[1] One is not therefore entitled to say that the sentence without the name of a place would yield no sense; but it is almost universally felt that it would scarcely yield a satisfactory sense. It is difficult and peculiar, and the fact that it contains the very phraseology which Paul elsewhere uses to introduce a local reference, inclines us strongly to believe that such a reference was originally intended. How then account for the fact that the ancient copies have no such reference? Everything that naturally calls for the insertion makes the omission in their case the more inexplicable. It can only have been that the words were really not a part of the original text, however hard we may find it to give a perfectly satisfactory account of such a peculiarity.

Nor is it easy to say what led to the change in Marcion's case. We may be almost quite sure he did not read "at Laodicea" in his text,[2] as a retort to Tertullian would then have been too obvious, and Tertullian's language, we believe, makes it clear that the question between them was not a question of text. Marcion was a native of Pontus, the son of a Bishop, and although it is going too far to regard him as representing an "Asiatic tradition," it is quite probable that he may have had some reason, perhaps gathered from a visit to Laodicea, for associating the Epistle with the Laodiceans. Moreover, Tertullian's

[1] *N.T. in Greek*, ii., App. p. 124. It is not meant that they accept this rendering, but only that they point it out as one not capable of being dismissed as a mere "unmeaning platitude." Cf. also Hort, *Prolegg.*, pp. 86–87.

[2] Yet Sabatier, p. 232, and McGiffert, pp. 380, 381, believe he did.

phrase, "diligentissimus explorator," may point to the fact that Marcion drew his conclusion from a study of the Epistle, and particularly from the reference Paul makes in Col. iv. 16 to an "Epistle from Laodicea." He conjectured that our present Epistle was the one referred to, and accordingly ventured on his alteration of the title. And to a certain extent he may have been right. The Epistle before us may be, probably is, the one Paul spoke of; yet he does not say it was an Epistle to the Laodiceans, but an Epistle that the Colossians would receive "from Laodicea." Marcion leapt too hastily to his conclusion, although, as we shall see, his title may share with the traditional one in representing a portion of the truth.

2. If criticism of the text leads to the conclusion that the words "at Ephesus" cannot stand as a sure part of the original, consideration of the tenor and contents of the Epistle undoubtedly seems to point in the same direction.

Paul's relations with Ephesus were very intimate and extended. He was united to the Christians there by the closest bonds of faith and suffering. No one who remembers the narrative in Acts of his activity among them, and of his pathetic parting with their leaders at Miletus, would be surprised to find that he had written them an important Epistle, and that such an Epistle, once appearing with their name, went on bearing that title everywhere unchallenged. But one would be surprised that in such an Epistle there should never from beginning to end be the slightest allusion to any former intimacy, no reminiscences of the past, no affectionate greetings, nothing but a calm review of Christian principles and their application, suitable for any number of Christian Churches, but passing strange if addressed to the Ephesians exclusively.

And this is how the matter stands. No companion is associated with Paul in this Epistle, though there were those with him who were well known at Ephesus; and although he can salute friends at Colosse and Laodicea, in Churches he had never seen, he has evidently no acquaintance to recall in a Church whose very name must have

been inscribed on his heart. Moreover, there are passages in the Epistle which, if they do not actually imply that the readers were quite unknown to him, certainly cannot easily be reconciled with the idea that he is directly addressing the Ephesians. He speaks (i. 15) of having "heard" of their faith and love, and twice over he says of them "if ye have heard" (iii. 2 and iv. 21), referring in the one case to a knowledge of his own divine commission to the Gentiles, and in the other to an elementary knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. It is really impossible to believe that the long personal explanation of iii. 1–8 was intended for the Ephesians alone. It does not satisfy to say that it was mainly intended for those who were converted since he was in Ephesus, for such a distinction would surely have been made clear, had it been in the writer's mind. It is quite possible, however, that the force of the expression "if so be," really amounts to an indirect affirmation of what he well knew to be the case;[1] and it must also be conceded that none of the passages referred to could justly be considered as debarring the Ephesians from participating in the letter, if they knew they were sharing it with a wider circle of readers, of whom the great bulk were personally unknown to the Apostle. That is to say, the passages seem decisive against the theory that the Ephesians are the sole recipients of the Epistle, but they do not absolutely shut them out from all conceivable interest in it.

What theory of destination, then, is most likely to fit the circumstances? We have to keep in mind the unanimous ecclesiastical tradition, the absence of a local designation, and the general character of the contents, combined with a total lack of personal associations.

Most of the arguments which decide against Ephesus exclusively, apply equally against Laodicea exclusively. It

[1] On εἴγε cf. Grimm-Thayer's *Lexicon*; Winer-Moulton's *Grammar of N.T. Greek* (1870), pp. 561–562; Ellicott, *in loc.*; Meyer, *in loc.*; Hort, *Prolegomena*, pp. 95–97. Hort points out that if εἴγε in these passages really is meant to express a doubt, it excludes all the other Churches of pro-consular Asia as well as the Church of Ephesus.

may be taken, however, as probable in a high degree that our Epistle is the Epistle referred to in Col. iv. 16 as coming from Laodicea. It would admirably supplement the special Epistle Colosse had already received, while Laodicea as a neighbouring town, not unlikely to be in danger of the heretical teaching, would also benefit from the exchange. It is not easy, however, to get rid of a certain doubt connected with the itineracy of Tychicus, who, naturally passing from Laodicea on to Colosse, could have brought a copy of the letter with him. Oltramare plausibly suggests that this was merely an affair of order; that two letters at once would have confused the special mission of Tychicus to Colosse, and that it was well that their own special letter should be left for a time to have its full effect on the minds of the Colossians. Be this as it may, our Epistle cannot have been an Epistle to Laodicea alone, if for no other reason than that, had it been so, it would have contained its own salutations, and not have left them to be conveyed by the roundabout way of Colosse (Col. iv. 15).

A few writers regard the letter as one of a very general character, addressed not to any Church or Churches, but rather to a peculiar *class* of readers, namely Gentile-Christians as such.[1] This theory, however, leaves the ecclesiastical tradition unaccounted for, and also the absence of any designation in the address. Moreover, it is unlikely in itself, and does not harmonise well with the kind of mission entrusted to Tychicus. It would have entailed, when he reached the several communities, an invidious distinction, quite out of keeping with the spirit of the Epistle; unless, indeed, it be assumed that all the Churches in Asia Minor were now predominantly of a Gentile-Christian character, an assumption which is probably true, but which makes the distinction implied by the theory superfluous.

The only hypothesis that finds anything approaching general acceptance at the present time, is the circular

[1] So Ewald and Milligan.

hypothesis, "suspected" by Beza, but first actually put forth by Archbishop Ussher in 1650–1654. It is adopted, with various modifications, by the great majority of modern writers. In its general form it represents our Epistle as a kind of apostolic encyclical, addressed to the Churches of proconsular Asia, a region to which Tychicus was bound, and of which Ephesus itself was the first and most important city.

On the whole this is a very natural suggestion, and one in which many of the peculiarities of the problem find a solution. It cannot be said, indeed, that it is altogether free from embarrassments of its own. It certainly ought not to be curtly dismissed on the ground that "Paul did not write circular letters," a statement quite on a level with the famous dictum that "miracles do not happen." It may, however, be said that we have no other example from Paul of a circular of this particular type. Galatians and 2 Corinthians are Pauline encyclicals, and the address indicates this in each case. Why, then, did not Paul use some such language in the present address? On the contrary, he is supposed to have left a blank space, to be afterwards filled up at various places understood by his messenger. This is the great stumbling-block to the acceptance of the theory. One can scarcely say it is an inconceivable thing, seeing that so many distinguished writers of all schools of opinion are willing to endorse it. Nor does it quite merit the contemptuous ridicule that is sometimes poured upon it. At the same time, it is difficult to accept such a device as a mode of procedure Paul was likely to adopt.[1] All defences of it seem more or less laboured, and rather suggest doubt than relieve it. It is scarcely possible, however, as we have seen, to resist the critical evidence that a place-name was not part of the original text. We have, therefore, only a choice of difficulties, and the circular hypothesis, if adopted, must be taken, not as a triumphant solution, but as on the whole

[1] Klöpper, *e.g.*, speaks of it as "etwas zu modern": *Der brief an die Epheser*, p. 8. So also McGiffert (*Apos. Age*, p. 381) and others.

offering the most satisfactory explanation that can be given. It agrees with the general tone, and with the marked and evidently intentional silences of the Epistle. It is in harmony with the instruction to Tychicus to give news of the Apostle by word of mouth, and accounts for the somewhat unusual general terms of the closing benediction. Besides, and not least important, it harmonises with the universal tradition. It gives Ephesus a prominent share in the Epistle, and thus permits of a natural explanation of the superscription. "To the Ephesians" was so far correct, and as Ephesus was the chief city with which the Epistle was associated, and the centre from which in course of time copies radiated to the other Churches of Christendom, it is perfectly comprehensible how the traditionary title arose and persisted.

## IV.

## DISTINCTIVE MESSAGE OF THE EPISTLE.

The prominent feature of the Epistle is its doctrine of the Church. Hitherto the name has been applied to definite local communities of believers, and also to groups of such communities in certain districts. Now it is applied to the universal community of all the Redeemed in Christ Jesus. The term 'catholic' is not employed till the time of Ignatius, but the idea and its most clear and comprehensive definition belong to this Epistle.

The Apostle of the Gentiles who had fought and won the battle of their admission to the Church of Christ, has now become the Apostle of catholicity. Perhaps we have thought of him too much as the champion of a side; we now see him as the friend of all sides in Christ. He is not laying any new or wider foundation, far less is he making any new condition of Church membership. That which made a man a member of the humblest local Church, at the same moment made him a member of the Church universal. The conception was a simple and harmonious

one, which men's minds readily grasped. Through all the scattered bodies of Christians there was from the beginning a consciousness of community, which found expression in many acts of sympathetic intercourse. The Book of Acts and the Epistles give constant evidence that Christians felt the new brotherhood to be a reality, transcending every distinction of race and clime. It is Paul's present task to fix this idea in imperishable definition, to trace it to its divine source, and to point to its manifold issues immediate and remote.

The causes which probably led to such a subject at such a time, have been already referred to. The outlook from Rome, the very heart of a world-wide Empire, no doubt had its influence, though it need not be pressed unduly. The influx of the Gentiles into the Church, and their assured position there along with the Jewish Christians on the ground of a common salvation, were obviously fitted to awaken conceptions of a comprehensive kind. Especially was this so with a mind like Paul's, distinguished by a passion for generalisation, and for pushing facts back to their ultimate principles. But above all, we believe the circumstances of his readers were a strong determining factor. Excursus and dissertation were not his habit. He was little likely to devote himself to a mere thesis. He has before his mind a definite circle of men, and he addresses them in a way that shows he is deeply concerned with the interests of their higher life. He is quite conscious that dangers beset them which threaten to unsettle their faith, and to hinder their progress in Christian grace. The triumphant ingathering of the Gentiles was itself not without a perilous tendency. The Jew at first had despised the Gentile from pride of race and religion, and it was just possible the Gentile might now begin to despise the Jew from pride of numbers. The Apostle who held the balance level at the beginning, holds it level now. And he does so at a spiritual height that is beyond all cavil. He had been moving on high ground in writing to the Colossians, but he did not then exhaust the significance of the pregnant thoughts he expressed. He will return to it now.

That is to say, a theological as well as an historical impulse impels him to write as he does. The transcendental view of Christ not only sets Him at the centre of the universe for worship and faith, but also for life. The actual history of redemption will continue to flow out from Him, and from Him alone. The new creation, in which there is no human distinction, will be realised only in Him, and in Him will live and move and have its being. Nothing could be more intimate and vital than this relation. "He is the Head over all things to the Church which is His Body." What this conception implies not only for the Church but for the universe itself, is the theme of the Epistle.

Certain characteristic features of the treatment have to be noticed. In the first place, Paul traces the idea of the Church to an eternal Divine origin. It is not an afterthought on God's part. It existed in Him before the foundation of the world. Believers, that is to say, lay in the Divine mind, purposed to redemption and sanctification, from all eternity. This was a great and daring thought, possible only because it was believed that the Redeemer Himself was in the eternal counsels of God. It flowed naturally from that belief, although it must have sent a thrill of wonder and awe into the hearts of those who first received it. Their calling, no less than the Apostle's, was "not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father." Thus, with the Christ Himself, those who were "in Him" were carried back in origin into "the heavenlies."

Further, this Divine idea has begun to have an historic realisation. It connected itself with "the truth as it is in Jesus." In the fulness of time God's Son was sent and came, and thenceforth the Church, purchased by His blood, was to be seen in process of formation. It has an ideal goal to which it moves, a perfect manhood in Christ, but it proceeds towards it by slow, up-building stages, hampered in the sphere of time by many adversities and conflicts, yet ever gathering strength as the Spirit of the Lord in every added part gains fuller and wider scope. Thus a movement of the Church is expressed, "constantly advancing

throughout the course of the world's history—a growing maturity up to that age when Christ, who filleth all in all, will impart to her the whole riches of His being and His gifts, and fill her with Himself as a vessel containing nothing else."[1]

But not only so, this consummation will carry with it the gathering together in Christ of all things in heaven and on earth into one. The end will be commensurate with the Divine purpose and power in a universal restoration. As sin has caused estrangement and rupture in the universe, far beyond anything that we can conceive, so will these end when sin itself is finally abolished, and the kingdom of darkness is overcome by the kingdom of light. This is not a new thought to Paul or to the Bible, but it penetrates to regions impossible for us to explore. It is the far-off divine event to which creation and redemption move. The Apostle believes in it because he believes so devoutly in God and in Christ, and yet it is a faith which he holds simultaneously with many sadly apprehensive thoughts, expressed in warnings even in this Epistle (v. 5), regarding those who can have no inheritance in the kingdom of heaven.[2]

The crowning feature in the teaching, however, is the manifold way in which Christ is set forth as ever central and essential to the Church. He is all in all to every individual soul of which she is composed, the beginning, continuance, and end of their new existence. By Him all believers become fellow-citizens in the city of God, glad members of a Divine family which never breaks up, and whose spirit is one of perfect love. Several striking figures are employed to express the relation of the Redeemed to their Redeemer; and these have become so familiar to the Apostle that they often melt into one another, and without any sense of incongruity he uses the one to supplement and complete the other.

[1] Döllinger, *First Age of the Church*, p. 214.

[2] On the summing up of all things in Christ, cf. Salmond, *Immortality*, 2nd ed., pp. 543–545.

Thus, Christians are the Building of which Christ is the all-essential, binding, unifying chief-stone of the corner. Stone is added to stone, life to life, and all are held together by Him until there results a Temple or Sanctuary, fairer than any designer on earth could fashion it, in which God Himself will delight to dwell. Again, Christians are a Body of which Christ Himself, though now in heaven, is the ever-living Head, continuing with them in close and vital union, inspiring them with His Spirit, guiding and leading them by His wisdom and power, sending the fresh pulses of His thought and life to the very remotest and humblest of their number. This figure is the one in which the idea of the unity of the Church may be most fully apprehended. It is as old as the time when man first began to reflect on the reality and significance of a corporate life, social, political, or religious. For Christians it is inexhaustible in the riches of its suggestion both of privilege and of duty. All their hope and all their responsibility are bound up in the union it portrays. And yet it is not the brightest or most alluring image. The Church of Christ is His Bride, He her Bridegroom. Here we have a personification, yet without the idea of independence, for the Bride as a Bride has no existence apart from Him who is to be her Husband. The Church is the beggar maid whom the King has found. He condescends to her in her low estate. He selects her for Himself, and by purifying and long education in love, He prepares her for her final participation in His glory. The relation is one of mutual affection and exclusive devotion, the most intimate, the most blessed that heart can conceive. To the Church there is One only supreme, her heart's longing and desire, without whom nothing is perfect, nothing worthy, at once the brightness and the law of her life, to whom to be in subjection is true freedom, and whom to perceive and adore is even now a beatific vision.

Such, then, is the conception of the Church with which the Apostle desires to fill the minds of his readers. It was certainly worthy to awaken a holy enthusiasm, and,

entering their hearts with the expulsive power of a new affection, to sweep away all ignoble thoughts and desires. The community to which they belong is presented to them in the most winsome guise, spiritual, transcendent, glorious, casting the relations of all earthly associations, however ancient or imperial, into shadow.

Yet the most important thing is, that this ideal is not a mere apocalypse or dream of the heavenlies. It struggles towards its realisation here and now, and the men and women addressed are its living constituents, taking conscious part in its development. It deeply concerns them to think of the earthly side of its fulfilment, for it contains a strong missionary and humanitarian appeal. They must work for it, and live for it. The more it is a consummation devoutly to be wished, the more it must inspire their zeal. If they understand it, it so smites the chords of life that Self, "trembling, passes in music out of sight." It is designed to be a universal brotherhood, and they cannot proceed to realise it by ways that are contrary to its inmost principle. If it win, it will be as they themselves were won, by attraction. Christians must ever seek to know what their Divine Head is desiring, and what are His plans for men. He died for all, and now lives that all may be brought into the fellowship of grace. A mission of love, therefore, lies at the centre of this ideal conception. The man has never comprehended it, whose heart does not leap at the thought that the Household of God is to be made up of many sons and daughters who are not yet home. The home-love beats for them all. They are all in possibility brothers. The solidarity of humanity must be revealed in grace and blessing even as truly as in misery and sin. And in no other way can it be so revealed than by Christ and His constraining, universal love. There is no enthusiasm for humanity to compare with that which He has begotten. It is possible to filch the idea, but not without Him to secure the motive and the power. It is profoundly true that "the world can only be reconciled to itself by being reconciled to God."

"When one who disbelieves in God and His Son tells his fellowmen to be one, can he also reasonably and consistently tell them in what measure or according to what model they are to be one? No. He can find no rule in the history of the past, stained as that has been with hatreds and dissensions. He must not be content with merely pointing to good men, for clearly the best human lives have been very defective, and in many respects warnings rather than examples. If he say, 'love and be at one as far as is for the greatest good of all,' he gives us a problem to calculate instead of an ideal which can at once elicit and measure, which can at once sustain and regulate love and unity. If he say, 'love and be at one as you ought,' he forgets that the very question is, How ought we to love and be at one? Human unity is a derived and dependent unity, and its standard can only be the ultimate and uncreated source of unity—in the indwelling of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Father." [1]

The Apostle's conception is thus one that immeasurably deepens the sense of Christian obligation. It is a high calling, and because it is so, it is a great ethical force. It runs deep to the roots of conduct and duty. Both the social and the individual life are transformed by it. Christianity does not indeed set itself in revolutionary opposition to the natural institutions of society. Its aim is rather to purify and refine them, and, where they are wrong, gradually to change and correct them. It is a new humanity, but, as has been truly said, "within the bosom of the old." [2] The family and the State will not find it their foe, but rather their friend, inasmuch as it proceeds to leaven the whole mass with higher ideals. It was undoubtedly on the social and ethical side that the early Christians felt most strongly the strain and pressure of their new position. Paul deals tenderly and earnestly with that. The air of the home, newly redeemed from the usages and sentiments of paganism, will be purer and sweeter if his counsels are obeyed, and there, where it is sometimes hard just because

[1] Flint, *Sermons and Addresses*, p. 17. Cf. also Westcott, *Social Aspects of Christianity*, pp. 9 sqq.

[2] Denney, *Studies in Theology*, p. 188.

the relations are so intimate and so continuous, the spirit of the new faith will have its best triumphs and its richest fruits. And the individual Christian must realise the responsibility of the new creation in his own heart. That which formerly brought no blush of shame to his cheek must now be abhorrent. It must be cast utterly from his thoughts. Union with the Body of Christ is either a relation of virtue, or it does not truly exist. The spirit which flows from the heavenly Head cannot be unhealthy or impure. Yet the relation does not imply that there is no responsibility on the part of the Christian. His obligation is rather increased, and the figure is not pushed to the point of fallacy and error. A man is not safe even as a Christian who does not put on the whole armour of God. That also is part of the Divine provision. In the conflict with evil, often dark and mysterious in its origin and process, the more terrible the more it is unseen, the good soldier of Jesus Christ can never lay his weapons down. He has to stand in the evil day, until at last he too is crowned a victor.

There is, however, one paramount Christian duty now before the Apostle's mind, and he refers to it at the very outset of his exhortation, in a passage most classic and memorable. Members of the Church of Christ, which is His Body, are to preserve its unity. They are not to create it. Christ's Spirit creates it: they are to preserve it, and hold it fast.

The Apostle here deals with a subject of the very first moment, whose difficulty and importance seem rather to increase as the Christian ages roll on. We cannot be too grateful for the fact that he so clearly defines it, in such manifest harmony with the mind and intercessions of the Master Himself. No gain could be greater to the modern Church than to apprehend this message, and to perceive its imperative necessity for the realisation both of its mission and its life.

For in the eyes of the world, the most prominent fact regarding the Church is not its unity but its disunion. In the course of its development it has shown a sad capacity for division, and the lines of cleavage have been both wide

and deep. We have first the great schism of the Eastern and Western Churches, and then the Western divided into Roman and Protestant, and the Protestant into Anglican, Presbyterian, Independent, and various other sections, not merely governing themselves in diverse modes on which more or less stress is laid, but occupying much of their strength in defence and attack in such a fashion that the warfare of the Church militant has been largely within its own borders. Undoubtedly many of the separations may have been highly justifiable, and may have emphasised or striven to conserve aspects of truth that were being hidden and despised.[1] There may have been multiplication by division. But the gain, even when there has been gain, has been accompanied by loss along other lines, and wherever the blame may rest, it is not possible to estimate the evil that has resulted from the impression that Christian separation has made on the world. Sport has often been made for the Philistines, and many Christian hearts have been sickened and discouraged, by such things as periodic scrutinies of statistics, comparison of funds, imputation of evil motives and methods, for all the world as if neighbouring Christian denominations were rival commercial establishments, and as if none could be happy without the depreciation of the others. The harvest to be reaped from this can only be of one kind. And in the presence of many sad evidences of its nature, it behoves Christians to consider how grave is the necessity to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace.

It is of course a spiritual unity which the Apostle has in his mind, and there is a certain element of consolation in the reflection that that may still exist while other and more external forms of harmony have ceased. The Church,

[1] "When the Church is actually divided, we have no right to say that this body which has seceded from the Church is a mere schism, while that body which has been seceded from is the true Church of Christ. . . . Sometimes the balance of blame may be on one side, sometimes on the other, sometimes on neither, except so far as mere ignorance and error and misunderstanding are objects of blame. Schism is always an evil, but sometimes it is a duty. It is a sin only in so far as it is wilful and unnecessary" (Rashdall, *Doctrine and Development*, p. 254).

it is true, has never been so entirely broken as to lose its character as a Church, and become quite identified with the world. "Nothing," says Dorner, "but sin, and indeed accumulated sin, can split the one Church in its manifestation into a multiplicity of Churches, which surrender positive communion with each other, Church divisions being always a grievous judgment on the visible Church. But still the unity of the Church can never be utterly abolished. Even the divided Churches in their character as Christendom stand in contrast with the world; and the circle where the light of Christianity still shines, be it ever so dimly, is never quite identical with the circle where it is extinguished or does not shine."[1] Moreover, the unity being one of faith and life has had its reality witnessed to by the presence of the Spirit in many different Churches, quite independently of their external distinctions. It is a note of true catholicity to rejoice in the fruits of the Spirit wherever they are found. In all ages and countries one Christian ought ever to be able to recognise another. If a man be Christ's, he has certain marks and lineaments that are never effaced. Be he Greek or Roman, Anglican or Presbyterian, he has the family likeness; he has tones and accents of the family speech.

Hence it is that all down the Christian ages there have ever been certain essential things which, among true Christians, have varied very little even in modes of expression. Chief of all is personal devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is always the same in kind, whether in Thomas à Kempis or in the latest recruit of the Salvation Army. Unvarying also, the Christian faith in the Fatherhood of God, and in the work and influence of the Holy Spirit. Even in ethics, and in conceptions, if not always in realisations, of righteousness, we can trace strands of the same thread running through all the Christian ages: ideals of truth and duty, of justice and goodness, which distinguish a Christian, and which in a moment would un-Christianise a man if he were to deny them. Not less

[1] *System of Christian Doctrine*, iv. 370.

strikingly we have abiding and universal marks in many forms of Christian devotion and praise, familiar from the beginning until now. Echoes of apostolic speech, chaste and devout expressions of the Christian Fathers and other saintly souls, breathe and mingle in the prayers of world-wide Christendom to this hour; and the hymns we sing, often with intense reverence and joy, are hymns of all the Christian centuries and all the Christian countries, coming sometimes we know not whence, only that they have the marks of the one universal Spirit, theirs once, ours now, simply because they are His ever.

There is thus a sense in which the unity of the Body of Christ is inviolable. It embraces the whole circle of the Redeemed no matter under what ecclesiastical clime they have been born and live. It is independent of the human will either to create it or absolutely to destroy it. In the fundamental idea it is the Spirit of Christ who makes Christians, and He alone. When He has united a living soul by faith to the living Christ, no man can put them asunder. They abide in one. The Reformers were perfectly right, and by no means essentially at variance with Paul's conception, in the distinction they drew between the Church visible and invisible. The development of the history of the Church forced them to that distinction.[1] They were declared un-Churched because they separated from the Church of Rome. On the contrary they maintained that only separation from Christ could un-Church them, whereas they had separated from the Pope and not from Christ. They adhered to a communion and fellowship with all saints, and the Church was invisible because the essential faith that united to Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul, remain unseen of men and known to God alone. Yet the Church was visible also, because it consisted in a community of men and women who united on the profession of a common faith, and whose lives of Christian fidelity and endeavour produced visible

[1] On the Reformers' view compared with that of the Apostle, cf. Forrest, *Christ of History and of Experience*, p. 283.

fruits; and yet, inasmuch as their profession might sometimes be false and their manner of life corrupt, the borders of the Church visible might be much wider than those of the Church invisible, and some might be ranked as Christians who had no real title to the name. Such a distinction is quite valid, although undoubtedly it is capable of illogical and even self-contradictory presentation. It is well to be able to fall back upon the truth, that it is union to Christ which alone secures union with His Body, the Church. At the same time we must never make this an excuse for turning our backs on the consequent duty of love and communion between all the members of that Body.

The fundamental factor, therefore, in Christian unity is the faith that unites to Christ. It is this which gives common participation in the common life with all its privileges and obligations. This is the "one faith" of which Paul speaks. It never varies. It is always the same thing, saving trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. We must not imagine that the meaning is one creed, *fides quæ creditur*.[1] No doubt it is impossible to have faith without creed. A man must believe certain things about the Being in whom he puts his trust. These things in a sense are his creed. But, in the more technical sense, what we understand by creed is an authoritative expression of the articles of belief, "which are regarded by the framers as necessary for salvation, or at least for the well-being of the Church."[2] Confession of this belief is made on entering the membership of the Church. When Paul wrote, and when Christian unity existed in its primitive state, such a confession can only have been expressed in a very simple form, and probably not everywhere in exactly the same language. It would not even be written, far less defined with any conscious attempt at logical precision. Most likely it did not exceed what is contained in the

[1] That "faith" is not here used in the sense of creed is clear from the fact that it is mentioned side by side with other elements of unity, all of which, if it meant creed, it would really include, one Lord, one God and Father, etc.

[2] Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, i. 4.

formula of Baptism, and in the words of institution of the Lord's Supper. The urgent necessity for the Church more fully and particularly to define the nature of its belief, arose with the doctrinal conflicts of the second century. Ever afterwards there has been a tendency to error in elevating dogmatic inferences to the place of essential verities of the faith, with consequent danger of rupture, intolerant zeal on the one hand, and conscientious protest on the other. "Two cannot walk together except they be agreed." But to magnify and extend the minutiæ of agreement with a perfect metaphysical subtlety, is a sure way to make walking together impossible. It has been the constant peril and temptation of the Church to make its unity dependent on scrupulous identity of doctrine, long after its formulæ have developed by accentuated conflict into elaborate systems of divinity.

No less has it been tempted to lay the foundation of unity where the Apostle did not lay it—in uniformity of ecclesiastical organisation. Mode of Church government has not been a definite matter of revelation or Divine ordinance. The opposite tenet has only landed Christendom in endless controversy and confusion. A different form of polity is no more a contradiction of Christian unity than monarchy or republicanism is a contradiction of human brotherhood. Christ is honoured, and the fruits of His Spirit appear, under polities the most diverse, episcopacy, presbytery, independency. Church government was a natural evolution, and though it is impossible historically to trace its early stages, it clearly by the second century had begun to assume very distinct features. But there was no Divine right. So far as the New Testament goes there was not even any fixed or crystallised form.

"As far as can be gathered from the simple interpretation of the text, without the interpretation which history has given it," the polity of the New Testament, says Hatch, "seems to have been capable of taking several other forms than that which, in the divine economy, ultimately established itself. It has the elements of an ecclesiastical monarchy in the position which is assigned to the Apostles.

It has the elements of an ecclesiastical oligarchy in the fact that the rulers of the Church are almost always spoken of in the plural. It has the elements of an ecclesiastical democracy in the fact, among others, that the appeal which St. Paul makes to the Corinthians on a question of ecclesiastical discipline is made neither to bishops nor to presbyters, but to the community at large. It offers a sanction to episcopacy in the fact that bishops are expressly mentioned and their qualifications described: it offers a sanction to presbyterianism in the fact that the mention of bishops is excluded from all but one group of Epistles. It supports the proposition that the Church should have a government in the injunctions which it gives to obey those who rule. It supports on the other hand the claim of the Montanists of early days, and the Puritans of later days, in the pre-eminence which it assigns to spiritual gifts. Which of these elements, and what fusion of them, was destined in the divine order to prevail, must be determined, not so much by exegesis, as by history."[1]

The Anglican is therefore justified in brushing aside the claim of the Romanist to found the unity of the Church in submission to a "common authority in belief, worship, and government." But he himself falls into an error equally grave, when he lays supreme stress on the apostolical succession of the ministry. He regards the outward unity of the Christian society as secured not only by the existence of the means of grace, but also by the existence of "a ministry spiritually endowed and commissioned." "The necessity for each individual Christian to remain in relation to these commissioned stewards if he wishes to continue to be of the divine household, has kept men together in one body."[2] But this is the discovery of a necessity which neither here in Ephesians, nor elsewhere in the New Testament, is asserted or revealed. Paul writes of the gifts which the Lord bestows on His Church for the service and perfecting of His people, but he does not lay down any formal and indispensable divine law.[3]

[1] *Organisation of the Early Christian Churches*, 5th ed., p. 21.

[2] Gore, *Ephesians*, pp. 167–168.

[3] He is dealing with functions not with offices. "Much profitless labour," says Hort, "has been spent on trying to force the various terms

"Ecclesiastical office existed, no doubt," writes Hatch, "by divine appointment, but by divine appointment only 'for the edifying and well-governing' of the community. Of the existence of the idea that ecclesiastical office in itself, and not as a matter of ecclesiastical regulation and arrangement, conferred special and exceptional powers, there is neither proof nor reasonable presumption."[1]

To make the unity of the Church dependent, therefore, on the permanence of a particular official caste, is as erroneous in interpretation as it is fatal in practice. Seldom has so momentous a doctrine, with such far-reaching unhappy results, been founded on so slender and uncertain a basis.[2]

There can be no shadow of doubt that Paul thought of Christ as represented by His Body, the Church, and not by any special class of officials. Few forces have more powerfully rent Christendom than insistence on the opposite. Yet the opposite is still insisted on by many earnest men. Bishop Gore speaks of apostolical succession as alone affording "a possible basis of union," "a fundamental law of the Church's life," a possession which Episcopal Churches simply "cannot be asked" to regard as only one of many permissible forms of government.[3] On this doctrine, to use his own expression, he "drops his anchor." It seems

used into meaning so many definite ecclesiastical offices. Not only is the feat impossible, but the attempt carries us away from St. Paul's purpose, which is to shew how the different functions are those which God has assigned to the different members of a single body" (*Christian Ecclesia*, pp. 157–158).

[1] Hatch, *loc. cit.*, p. 139.

[2] "It is not to the apostle," says Lightfoot, "that we must look for the prototype of the bishop. . . . The episcopate was created out of the presbytery. . . . This creation was not so much an isolated act as a progressive development, not advancing everywhere at an uniform rate, but exhibiting at one and the same time different stages of growth in different churches" (*Philippians*, pp. 196, 227). Again, "For communicating instruction and for preserving public order, for conducting religious worship and for dispensing social charities, it became necessary to appoint special officers. But the priestly functions and privileges of the Christian people are never regarded as transferred or even delegated to these officers. . . . The only priests under the gospel, designated as such in the New Testament, are the saints, the members of the Christian brotherhood" (pp. 184–185).

[3] *Church and Ministry*, 4th ed., pp. 312, 313, 316.

a thousand pities to drop it just where large sections of Christendom are never likely to agree with him. One must certainly adhere to his convictions though the heavens should fall, but is it so very evident that truth is on the side of the Bishop? There was much in Browning's instinct that what God blessed once will not prove accurst. We may welcome the assurance, due to the courtesy of Christian instinct, that it is not meant to "judge" men who are presumed to be outside the "succession." But as matter of fact they are judged, and not they alone but the Holy Spirit Himself, who has been pleased abundantly to acknowledge them in the specific work of the Christian ministry—the ingathering and edifying of human souls. That there has been such manifest blessing is not denied, at least by such eminent writers as Dr. Gore.[1] The difficulty is to account for it on this theory. Perhaps it is the one thing that in his secret heart makes many a good Anglican feel not quite sure. "In all denominations," says Dr. Llewelyn Davies, "we are not so sure of ourselves; we see in those who are not of our communion signs of truth, proofs of goodness, which forbid us to assume that Christ has not taught them, that His Spirit has not moved in them."[2] What answer does Bishop Gore make? "The blame for separations lies, on any fair showing, quite sufficiently with the Church to make it intelligible that God should have let the action of His grace extend itself widely and freely beyond its covenanted channels."[3] But if so, should there not be grave searching of heart as to the absolute indispensableness of the apostolical succession? It is granted that God can and does work outside it, but

[1] Cf., however, what Dr. Sanday says about the "rank and file," in his *Conception of Priesthood*, p. 97. In noting Moberly's refusal to judge those whom God has blessed outside the "succession" (*Ministerial Priesthood*, p. 61), he writes: "It were only to be wished that the same caution would extend more completely to the rank and file. It would save them not only from exciting much just resentment against the Church of which they boast, but also from many a departure from Christian humility and charity in themselves."

[2] *Spiritual Apprehension*, p. 206.

[3] *Church and Ministry*, p. 314.

it is declared that any expectation that He will do so is most "precarious and insecure."[1] This is surely risky ground for the anchor to hold in. For it concedes that there were times when, in the sight of the great Head of the Church there were matters of far more importance than even apostolical succession. How is it consistent with the notion of the ruling wisdom and truth and power of the Risen Lord, that He should not only have permitted His grace to extend itself beyond the "covenanted channels" at historic moments of error and disagreement, but that He should have continued to allow that grace to flow and expand with ever-increasing volume for long generations? Does it not forcibly suggest that He does not lay supreme stress where we are invited to lay it? He sits loosely to, or rather far above, this mere matter of official arrangement. He blesses with it, and without it. Episcopacy may be wise, expedient, ancient, and historic, but He has abundantly shown that it is not an indispensable bond by which His Spirit is bound. "Christ is not so poor," said the Reformer Callixtus, "as to have His Church only in Sardinia." One owes so many debts to Dr. Gore that it would be a matter of regret to misrepresent any cause with which he is so prominently identified. But the controversy is old and vexed, and the essential working of the principle, and its bearing on sacramentarian doctrine, are well understood. Even discounting the priestly arrogance it has so often engendered,

[1] It would scarcely be worth while to refer to anything so palpably outrageous as the following, but for the assurance that such statements are made pretty broadcast by a certain section of the Church of England:

"The Catholic Church is the home of the Holy Ghost. It is His only earthly home. He does not make His home in any dissenting sect. Sometimes people quarrel with the Church, and break away from her, and make little sham churches of their own. We call these people dissenters, and their sham churches sects. The Holy Ghost does not abide—does not dwell—with them. He goes and visits them perhaps, but only as a stranger. Dissenters can never be quite sure when the Holy Spirit will come to them; or when He will stay away. But He is always in the Church. Our Lord said, speaking to the Apostles, 'He shall abide with *you* for ever.'"

*A Book for the Children of God*, p. 77: a Manual for Confirmation Candidates, 3rd ed., 1899. Published by W. Knott, 26 Brooke St., Holborn.

it cannot even be seriously thought of as an absolutely essential basis of Christian unity, a *sine quâ non* of the Church of Christ.

At the same time, it ought to be said that many vigorous protests have been made within the Anglican Church herself against this perilous assertion of Episcopacy as an indispensable condition of the Church. Undoubtedly the clearest demonstration we possess that Scripture itself gives no foundation for such an assertion, has been made by Lightfoot and others of her most distinguished scholars. "It should be distinctly borne in mind," writes Dr. Sanday, "that the more sweeping refusal to recognise the non-episcopal Reformed Churches is not, and can never be made, a doctrine of the Church of England. Too many of her most representative men have not shared in it. Hooker did not hold it; Andrewes expressly disclaimed it; Cosin freely communicated with the French Reformed Church during his exile. Indeed, it is not until the last half of the present century that more than a relatively small minority of English Churchmen have been committed to it."[1] The following may also be cited, although it stands alongside much that it would probably not become a Presbyterian to utter:

"As to Episcopacy," writes Archdeacon Hare, "the utmost that can with reason be said, is that which Bramhall has said, that it is requisite to the perfection of a Church. But so too is the full development of all the other elements of the Church, as has been admirably shown by my beloved and revered friend, the Chevalier Bunsen, in his treatise on *the Church of the Future;* the full development of the Presbyterian element, of the Diaconate, in its true original purport, and of the Laity, as taking their appropriate part in all matters concerning the life and government of the Church. The rightful development of each of these great organs of the life of the Church is to the full as important as that of the Episcopate; and if we do not refuse the title of a Church to a body where others of these organs are imperfectly developt, or maimed, or latent, we have no right

[1] *Conception of Priesthood*, pp. 95–96

to refuse it to a body where the Episcopal element, which manifestly is of less moment than any of the others for the actual life of the Church, is wanting. If the body holds to the *One Head*, and is animated by the *One Faith*, and is sanctioned by the *One Baptism*, it is a Church before God; and woe to us, if we deny that it is so! Our denial will recoil upon our own heads; and we shall only cut ourselves off from the blessings of Christian communion with those by whose faith and knowledge and love we might otherwise be instructed and edified."[1]

But though there have been many perilous departures from the simple spiritual basis of Christian unity, the Apostle was very far from thinking that that unity was to exist only in idea and not in concrete fact. It is essential to his conception that the Church is a community having a visible corporate life, a succession of redeemed persons as well as of redeeming influences.[2] A Church wholly invisible would, as we have hinted, be a contradiction, something quite incapable of the life, testimony, and conflict, to which Paul exhorts. There is one faith, but also one baptism, that is, an open profession of the inner faith, and a visible entrance into the Christian body. There follow some obvious and important consequences.

First of all, for the individual. A believer in Christ

[1] J. C. Hare, *Mission of the Comforter* (1846), ii. 1011.

Amid a voluminous literature on this momentous question, reference may be made to Gladstone, *Church Principles;* Gore, *Church and Ministry*, and *The Mission of the Church;* Moberly, *Ministerial Priesthood;* Lefroy, *Christian Ministry;* Hatch, *Organisation of the Early Christian Churches;* Lightfoot, *Dissertation on the Christian Ministry*, in *Philippians;* Fairbairn, *Christ in Modern Theology;* Hort, *Christian Ecclesia;* Brown, *Apostolical Succession;* Sanday, *Conception of Priesthood;* Lindsay, *Church and Ministry.*

The validity of the Anglican Orders is of course itself denied by the Church of Rome. Cf. the recent Bull *Apostolicæ Curæ* of Leo XIII., 1896; the *Answer* of the English Archbishops, 1897; and the *Vindication* by the Roman Catholic Archbishop and Bishops of the Province of Westminster, 1898.

[2] Gladstone was no doubt right in saying that the essence of a Church necessarily implied a succession of persons, not merely of doctrines. Understand "redeemed persons," and who could demur? But the High Anglican interpretation is to understand persons of a special official caste, which is quite different.

cannot remain absolutely detached from his fellow-believers. An "unattached" Christian is really a contradiction in terms. He breaks the relation of bodily union with the living Head, and refuses to aid in fulfilling many functions that can never be fulfilled by isolated and solitary souls. He must show himself a part of the great community by which Christ manifests Himself in the world, and by the consecration of all his powers and gifts he must strive to fulfil the whole Will of his Master in such manifestations—that is, must contribute his share, as Christ animates and endows him, to the edifying and increase of the Body. To refuse to do so, and yet profess to be "in Christ," is to deny the Christianity of the Bible, the only source from which our conception of Christianity springs.

Further, the consequences of the doctrine of Christian unity are equally important for the various denominations of Christians. They must keep this before them as an idea to be realised and made manifest. To ignore and despise it is one of the gravest calamities. Men are not impressed by talk of a unity the signs of which they cannot see. We have been very earnestly reminded—and the estrangement from Christianity of many in all classes of society affords some support to the contention—that "the world will never be converted by a disunited Church."[1] If only we understand that it is not imperative that unity should be expressed by a uniform polity, such a statement demands very grave consideration. For it cannot be denied that the divisions of Christendom have to a large extent shorn her of her power. Her voices have grown confused, and the force of her witness-bearing has been diminished. The strength that unity alone can give, is not brought to bear on the minds and hearts of men, and the cause of Christ suffers at the hands of His friends. It is incumbent, therefore, on earnest men in all the Churches to seek a remedy. Above all, there should be an end to an easy discovery of causes of division. The individualism of Protestantism has

[1] Milligan, *Resurrection of Our Lord* (1899), p. 207.

run to excess, so that men have almost come to think as lightly of "forming a Church" as of forming a club. All sense of responsibility is thus taken away; and the Apostle's belief that there is in Christian unity something worth striving to preserve, is not only forgotten, but his exhortations to lowliness and long-suffering have become peculiarly superfluous.

It is a serious question what may be done by way of healing breaches that are already made. History proves that it is easier to separate than to unite. "Sed revocare gradus, Hic labor, hoc opus est." Yet it is not needful or desirable just to retrace the steps. What we have to think of are new steps to something larger, nobler, and more in harmony with the will of Christ. If there be true harmony of spirit, there ought to be outward expression of it by intercommunion and co-operation in Christian service. It is the policy of continual aloofness that is fatal. Closer contact and intercourse in Christian life would probably dispel more than half the clouds and misunderstandings that estrange Christians. If men are agreed on the essence of the gospel, it should not be impossible to meet, not merely in semi-strangeness on philanthropic platforms, but in manifest unity in one another's pulpits, and even at the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. Few things would be more speedily impressive of actual spiritual unity.

It may be we have need to humble ourselves in order to learn the first principles of the Apostle's doctrine. The true safeguard of Christian unity is the cultivation of the Spirit of Christ, and it has often been acknowledged that it is not our differences that divide us so much as the passions that gather round them. What we forget too easily is the meekness and forbearance in love. In the transgression of these the Body is hurt, and quivers in all its limbs. As we have said, the unity of one vast universal Church organisation is a thing that need not, perhaps should not, enter our dreams; but there are local approximations that would obviously be precious, and these should never be absent from our prayers. In their realisation in the spirit of love, and for the greater glory of Christ, the

Church would put on her beautiful garments, and go forth "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." Her "frost-bound love," her waiting leaves and fruits, would have found their "summer": *Congregatio societasque hominum in qua fraterna charitas operetur.*

# THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

PAUL passed through some strange experiences during his second missionary journey. Never since the day on the road to Damascus had he been so directly and mysteriously under the constraint of the Divine hand. It is clearly providential, in view of the westward course into which he was carried, that Silas, the Roman citizen, became his companion. Paul's idea was simply to confirm the Churches already established, but God's Spirit led him far afield. Again and again barriers were put in his way, and he was guided onwards by a series of seemingly inexplicable negations. He fell sick in Galatia, was not permitted to preach in Asia, and was turned aside when he assayed to enter Bithynia. His course was one of continual compulsion down to the windy plains of Troy and the margin of the Ægean. Then for the first time the leading became positive, and the Voice called him over the sea to new and untrodden soil. It is scarcely correct to speak of his voyage to Macedonia as a passage from one continent to another. The distinction between Europe and Asia was not existent in his day. He only thought of entering a new province of the great world-wide Empire.

Three faithful companions were now with him. Silas had either accompanied him from Antioch, or had agreed to meet him in Asia Minor after returning from Jerusalem; Timothy had joined him at Lystra; and now a third appears on the scene at Troas. For in Acts xvi. 10 the narrative suddenly begins to speak in the first person; it

does not resume the third until Paul and Silas are maltreated and compelled to leave Philippi; and it reverts to the first once more, when, five years later (ch. xx.), the Apostle returns. We are thus in the presence of an eyewitness who describes events at firsthand, who travels from Troas to Philippi, and there abides until he is taken up again a few years later. It is a very general and probable opinion that this companion was the writer of Acts himself, the "beloved physician." Tradition, since the days of Jerome and Eusebius, has regarded Luke as a native of Antioch, where Paul made his acquaintance. The Apostle certainly needed his presence and skill at Troas, but it is impossible to think that Luke had been summoned thither, for the simple reason that Paul, as we may say, was led to Troas blindfold, not knowing whither he went. This meeting was not therefore prearranged. Although Luke may have had relations with Antioch (and Eusebius implies no more), it seems more likely that he was settled at Troas, and that Paul first met him when he sought his professional aid. The physician visited the Apostle on his sick-bed, the one rendered the other service, and the noble life-long friendship was begun. Renan and Ramsay make a further suggestion, that Luke was a Macedonian who knew Philippi well, and, perhaps even better, Neapolis, where he may have imbibed his evident love of the sea. He may have talked frequently with the Apostle about his native land, and so impressed its needs and opportunities on the mind of the intrepid missionary, that it would be no wonder if *he* were the "certain man of Macedonia" who figured in the vision, and whose pathetic pleading, "Come over and help us," seemed to indicate the Divine will, and to solve all the mysteries of the Divine compulsions. It is a fascinating and probable conjecture, though whether it represents actual fact or not, it is of course impossible to say. We only know that an open gate to a fair field now presented itself, and that the Apostle resolved to enter in. Macedonia had need of him. Famous though it were in story, its homes were steeped in pagan superstition, and the

yearning cry of its restless spirit was for some word of grace and truth such as the messenger of Jesus alone could bring.

So Paul crossed the Ægean, the very winds of heaven favouring his course.[1] The first evening brought him under the shadows of the lofty mountains of Samothrace, and the next saw him ready to land at the port of Neapolis. This is the modern Kavalla, and, like most Mediterranean towns, it looks charming from the sea. Its houses rise in clustering tiers on the gentle slope of a jutting promontory, and its many-coloured walls and towers flash gaily in the sunshine. It is but a small place of four or five thousand inhabitants, and owes much of its embellishment to the munificence of Mehemet Ali, who, in the early part of the nineteenth century, mastered Egypt so thoroughly by the help of his Albanians, and who never forgot Kavalla as his native city.[2] When Paul saw it, its chief ornament was the temple of Diana, which is said to have been built on the model of the Parthenon, and which crowned the apex of the hill. But what mainly attracted travellers was the fact that the town was a terminus of the great military highway, the Via Egnatia, which here touched the sea, and which formed one of the chief means of communication between the East and the West. This highway Paul sought, for he does not appear to have done more than merely pass through Neapolis. On the morrow, in the beautiful autumnal light, he struck northwards up the broad paved way that had so often resounded to the tread of the Legions. The pass was an easy one, through a natural gateway among the lofty peaks of Pangæus, and his objective, Philippi, was only eight miles inland. When he reached the summit, a fair scene met his vision. Ranges of lofty mountains (some of them covered with snow), shut in on all sides save the west an immense and fertile plain, threaded with rivulets,

[1] He accomplished in two days what took him five on his return journey.

[2] Mehemet Ali erected a large Mohammedan College in Kavalla, part of his endowment furnishing a kind of charitable foundation analogous to that of Christ's Hospital in London, or of Heriot's Hospital in Edinburgh.

oozing with springs, and retaining in its centre a long marshy lake, whose tall reeds almost hid from view the herds of cattle that loved to wade in its waters. Stately poplars and drooping willows made welcome shade, and fruit trees and trailing vines and wild roses everywhere filled the air with fragrance. On a spur of the mountains, directly opposite the pass, was built the town of Philippi, with citadel and temples and amphitheatre on its heights, and forum, market-place, and dwelling-houses, sloping downwards far into the valley. The Via Egnatia passed the east end of the lake, and led straight into the market-place.[1]

Philippi had in some respects a notable history. Of old it was simply called Krenides or "The Springs," but when Philip of Macedon added it to his kingdom, he gave it his own name, and used its strategic position as a frontier fortress against the Thracians. He also worked the gold mines in the neighbouring hillsides and valleys, for the district was reputed to be one of fabulous wealth. Indeed he almost exhausted the mines, extracting from them an annual revenue of over a thousand talents of gold,[2] and thereby securing a weapon of conquest almost as powerful as his celebrated phalanx. In spite of the fact that the peasantry verily believed that the gold "grew" in the fields, and that the precious grains were turned up with every furrow of the plough, very little was left for the Roman period, and mining was scarcely known at Philippi when the Apostle appeared.

But there was a still more memorable association, and one that left its stamp on the town very vividly even in Paul's day. On this plain of Philippi, nearly a century before, the great battle had been fought which decided the fate of the old Roman Republic. Here two hundred thousand Romans rushed together in deadly onslaught, and the famous leaders, Brutus and Cassius, "the last of all the

[1] For descriptions of Philippi, cf. Renan, *St. Paul;* Leake, *Northern Greece*, iii.; Lewin, *St. Paul*, i. Lewin gives the results of the French researches of Heuzy and Daumet, who were sent out by Napoleon III.

[2] Cf. Boeckh, *Public Economy of Athens*, i. 15.

Romans," met their fate, the fortune of war declaring for the Cæsarians. In honour of this victory Augustus made Philippi, as Luke proudly records, a Roman "colony," with all the privileges of the Jus Italicum, which meant not only that it was governed on the Roman model, but that its territory was regarded as a veritable piece of Italian soil, exempt from the taxation which less-favoured provincial cities were compelled to pay into the Imperial exchequer.[1] Hence the Apostle found himself amid a population more than half Latin, for many veterans of the great campaign were settled in the city, and still more were added eleven years later, when the infatuated Antony made his ignominious flight from Actium in the wake of the purple sails of Cleopatra. But there was also a solid foundation of the old Macedonian stock in Philippi, a race that has always been notable for its sturdy, warlike qualities, its loyalty, its generosity, and its fidelity. The blighting shadow of paganism hung of course over the whole society, and the worship of such deities as Dionysus, Silvanus, and Diana, was universally prevalent.

Philippi was not a commercial centre, and Jews were not present in large numbers. Yet their religion was in evidence; and walking out about a mile beyond the city walls, along a line marked nearly all the way by the sepulchral monuments of wealthy families, the Apostle came on the Jewish meeting-place, a small "proseucha" or synagogue,[2] on the banks of the Gangites. It was on the very site of the battle, and in the neighbourhood of the old mines. But another kind of victory was now to be won, and a finer gold to be gathered. Here Paul converted Lydia, the purple-seller of Thyatira,—a woman and an Asiatic, the first-fruits of the gospel in Europe! The

[1] On the privileges conferred by the Jus Italicum, cf. Ramsay's *Hist. Comm. on Galatians*, p. 204. "Those rights — which included freedom from direct taxation, freedom of constitutional government, and the right to hold and convey land according to Roman custom—of course, belonged in full only to the *coloni*, and not to the *incolæ*, the old inhabitants."

[2] Cf. Schürer, *Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, ii. Div. ii. pp. 68–73. Schürer, in opposition to the common view, makes it clear that there was no real distinction between a proseucha and a synagogue.

story, in the light of after days, will never fail to impress the imagination. It is like coming on the source of a mighty river away up amid the moss and the boulders. "The kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation." How the Philippians would have scoffed had they been told that this humble meeting would keep the name of their city green long after there was not left one stone of it standing on another! Lydia came into the faith with her whole house, and others, both men and women, soon followed her example. She proved indeed a fervent and hospitable adherent, and seems almost to have impressed her own kindly and gracious character on the young Christian community that was formed. Ere very long, however, came the episode of the epileptic slave girl,[1] which led to proceedings that abruptly stopped the labours of Paul and Silas, and ultimately caused them to leave the city. The masters of this poor creature, seeing their gains go from them—a syndicate touched in its tenderest part—fanned a persecution in whose tumult Paul for the first time endured the torture of a Roman scourging, and made the acquaintance of the dark and noisome "inner prison." Our memory retains the story of the earthquake and the jailer, and also that of the humiliating plight of the vain and timorous magistrates, when they discovered the citizenship of the prisoners, and trembled for the consequence of their barbarity, not because it was inhuman, but because it was grossly illegal.

Paul thus accomplished one of the most memorable missions of his life. He made friends with whom first love was never to wane. Through all his after career he had almost no fault to find with them; they remained his "joy and crown." Nor did he ever lose an opportunity of returning to them. At the critical time when he was filled with anxiety regarding the result of his first letter to the Corinthians, he left Ephesus and went into Macedonia,

[1] A Pythoness, possessed with the spirit of the Pythian Apollo, or simply with a spirit of divination. Cf. Baur, *Paul*, i. 147–151. Plutarch and other writers describe such a one as ἐγγαστρίμυθος, whence this girl is often spoken of as a ventriloquist; *e.g.*, by Ramsay and many others.

which doubtless meant a visit to Philippi; again, when the riot of Demetrius compelled a departure from Ephesus, he visited his old friends and imparted to them "much exhortation," easily enlisting their sympathies in favour of the great Collection which then occupied his mind; three months later, after a short sojourn in Greece, he was back once more *en route* for Jerusalem, and spent Easter week at Philippi, scarcely able to tear himself away. Further, if the Pastorals refer to a period of release, he visited Macedonia once more, very probably twice. Apart, therefore, from the present Epistle, we might easily have inferred how large a place the Philippians held in his heart. They were the magnet whose attraction he could never resist.

The prominence of the Church in Philippi ceased, however, with the Apostle's life. It is not again heard of until more than half a century has elapsed, when it emerges into the light for a moment in connection with Ignatius and Polycarp. The cruel guard of "ten leopards," as Ignatius himself calls them, led the aged Bishop of Antioch along the military highway that Paul trod, and consequently through Philippi. The Philippians did not despise his chains, but rather regarded them as the entwining of "saintly fetters, the diadems of the truly elect"; and they generously escorted him on his westward march far down the valley towards the Strymon. They wrote to the bereaved Church of Antioch, as he requested them, and sent their message through Polycarp of Smyrna. This led Polycarp to write them his well-known Epistle, in which he heartily commends them, recalling their early reputation in the gospel, although indeed he grieves over a member and his wife who seem to have sullied the fair fame of the Church by some notorious act of avarice. Above all, he refers to the blessed Apostle, whom he can never hope to equal, and who taught them "both by word of mouth and by 'letters,' which will still edify them in faith, and love, and hope." [1] Thereafter, save for the fact

[1] Cf. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, pt. ii.; *Ignatius and Polycarp*, i. 36–37, iii. 313–314, and 327 n. Also *Comm.*, pp. 62 sqq., and 138 sqq.

that its bishops are mentioned once or twice as present at Councils in the fourth and fifth centuries, the Church sinks back into final obscurity. There has been no Church in Philippi for ages, nor does the town itself any longer exist. A few wretched Turkish hovels, pitched a little lower in the valley, have perpetuated the name (Felibejik), but the site itself is only marked by scattered slabs of ancient tombstones and sarcophagi, a few sculptured stones, and three or four melancholy pillars, supposed to mark the site of the forum where the lictors' rods tore the flesh of the evangelists. "Born into the world with the highest promise," says Lightfoot, "the Church of Philippi has lived without a history, and perished without a memorial."

One thing, however, will never be forgotten—its affection for the Apostle, and its warm and generous remembrance of him in his affliction. Therein the "saints" of Philippi, and the office-bearers, and the devout women not a few, broke their alabaster box of ointment, exceeding precious, and filled the House of God with the fragrance. Twice they sent gifts after their beloved teacher to Thessalonica, once to Corinth, and now their care of him blossoms again as he languishes at Rome. Only from friends who lay deep in his love and confidence would Paul have received gifts of money. We can measure his tenderness for them by the strength of the principle which absolutely forbade him to take such help from any others. He not only knew that by them he would never be misunderstood, but he could not find it in his heart to refuse aught they offered. It is the way of love to reveal itself as much by what it will receive as by what it bestows. Acceptance is not merely for its own joy, but even more for the joy of them who give. Paul, therefore, is grateful for the gift for its own sake, but he magnifies it still more for the grace and goodness from which it sprang.

It is this loving remembrance of him that is the occasion of the Epistle. The Philippians had doubly enhanced their gift by sending with it an honoured messenger. Epaphroditus shines like a star in the fulfilment of his congenial embassy. He is so much in harmony with the Apostle

that he throws himself with ardour into the work at Rome, and greatly refreshes Paul's heart. Indeed he attempts to do too much; and either because the malaria seizes on his exhaustion, or because his weakness quickens the seeds of previous disease, he falls grievously ill, "nigh unto death." But Paul's prayers for his beloved companion are answered, and the Apostle is thus saved sorrow upon sorrow. The friends at Philippi have also to be assured, for they have heard of the illness with alarm. Epaphroditus himself has grown a little homesick, touched no doubt by the tenderness of their solicitude. Accordingly Paul resolves to send him back, and at the same time makes him the bearer of his missive.

The authenticity of Philippians has been little challenged, or at least not with sufficient force to affect the general judgment of scholars in its favour. Weizsäcker does it no more than justice when he classes it with 1 Thessalonians, and says that the reasons for attributing it to Paul are "overwhelming." "There is nothing in it," says McGiffert, "which need cause doubt as to its genuineness. It deserves to rank alongside of Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans, as an undoubted product of Paul's pen."[1] Indeed it is utterly purposeless if it is not genuine. Neither doctrinally nor ecclesiastically is there any reason for its fabrication, and if Paul did not write it, it can only be taken as a pure essay in Style, an exceedingly subtle and successful exercise in Composition, which is practically inconceivable.

The Epistle is just such as we should have expected it to be from the nature of the case, very intimate and personal. There are few references in it to doctrine, and such as they are, and important as they are, they come in incidentally, rather for practical than for didactic reasons. Its style is flowing and free, very like that of a spoken address, and quite untrammelled by any difficulties of discussion or polemic. It is an outpouring of the heart, in which Paul sees nothing but the faces of his friends, and listens to nothing but the voice of his own affection for

[1] *Apostolic Age*, p. 393.

them. Sometimes it is touching and pensive, as it could not fail to be, but the sunshine of hope swiftly breaks through the clouds, and the dominant note is always one of joy. In none of the Epistles does the Apostle reveal himself in more alluring tenderness and magnanimity. A few severe words do indeed fall from him ere the letter closes, provoked doubtless by some personal and galling experience, but over the whole there is the undoubted charm of a boundless charity and a profound peace. We are conscious how happy the Apostle is, as there passes before his mind's eye the wholly sympathetic gathering that will receive his message under the shadow of the Philippian hills.

It cannot be said that there is any definite plan in the Epistle, and it does not therefore lend itself easily to division. Not that it is quite structureless, but that its logic, as Sabatier says, is rather that of feeling than of thought. Only if we can put ourselves in touch with the Apostle's intimate and friendly relations with his readers, and his whole-hearted trust in them, shall we understand the frequent transitions which do not break the current but only distinguish its natural windings. It is the crudest of all criticism, totally devoid of insight, which can only account for changes of tone by postulating the interpolation of "another Epistle." We require but small perception of the characteristics of a free and familiar correspondence, to recognise that one's thoughts frequently refuse to be bound by the rigidity of logical sequence, and that nothing is more natural than to finish up and then to start again. The unity of the Epistle lies in the impulse of affection, and in the affinity of interest, between the writer and his readers, so that what affects the one intimately affects the other. There are but two subjects uppermost in the mind, the Philippians and the Apostle himself. To remember this gives all the clue we need, and all that is possible. The matters dealt with will be found simply to alternate between these two subjects.

The Epistle is addressed to the "saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons."

These office-bearers are perhaps too sharply defined to our modern minds by such technical titles, and the words describing them ought to be rendered in the most primitive way as simply "those who have oversight and those who take part in the ministry or service of the Church." They are thus honourably distinguished either because the initiative of the Philippian liberality proceeded from them, or because it naturally fell to them to carry it out. The introduction (i. 3–11) is a beautiful piece of thanksgiving and prayer. The Philippians are enshrined in the Apostle's memory; in truth he has them all "in his heart." They are never absent from his prayers, and his ardent longing for them is that they may grow more and more in love and knowledge and discernment; that their approval may be only of high things, their lives unsullied and inoffensive, abounding in the fruits of righteousness.

Then follows (vv. 12–26) tidings about himself. He describes his situation as only he could have thought of it, not one of despondency but of hope and even of good success, in which the very limitations of his bonds have proved a marvellous furtherance of the gospel. For the soldiers of the Imperial guard have listened to the story of the Cross, and have roused an interest which has spread far beyond them. Even his friends in the city have taken courage from his example, and far from being cast down by his chain have been stimulated to greater zeal and freer testimony. It is true there are others who do not mean to be his friends, and yet they also are the occasion of joy. They are not in sympathy with him; they are rather personally antagonistic and partisan, and would not regret to increase his humiliation; but all the same they "preach Christ," and merely to think of the familiarising of men's ears with that great name is a cause of rejoicing. Besides, he knows well that these very trials will have a sanctifying effect on his own spiritual life, and that his sure hope of never being ashamed as a preacher of the gospel will be fulfilled, so that Christ will be magnified by him whether living or dying. Living or dying! he is so certain of gain either way that he knows not which he should choose.

His own desire is to be "with Christ." But the thought of continued service to those he loves draws him back. Something assures him that he will yet be spared for their sakes, and that they will have reason to glory abundantly when he comes among them again.

As he thus speaks of seeing them, his thoughts fix themselves upon his friends (i. 27–ii. 18), and we have an earnest and eloquent passage exhorting them to unanimity and fidelity in the Christian life. They too have adversaries who would terrorise them, and as it had been to him, so still to them, Philippi is a cruel environment, prolific of much suffering for Jesus' sake. But above all, he most tenderly beseeches them, as they love him and would give him perfect joy, to stand fast in one spirit, to be of one accord, of one mind. The inward life is of the first moment, and it has no greater foes than strife and vainglory. Alas, when personal ambition and vanity go so far as to divide the Church into parties! There is but one way to avoid it: humility; self-abnegation. Was there ever more glorious example than that which the Lord Himself gave? Has He not impressed it on the Christian heart for ever? For though He pre-existed in the form of God, yet He did not selfishly cling to the prerogatives of the divine majesty, but rather laid aside His heavenly glories, and took on Him the form of a servant, assuming the likeness of men. Nay more, as a man He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to God unto death, even the death of the Cross. This was supreme self-humiliation, and yet every step of lowliness was an advance towards the truest exaltation. God raised Him to the highest eminence, that in His name all creatures should pay homage and confess Him Lord.[1] Under the stimulus of

[1] It is very remarkable that this famous passage occurs in such a perfectly incidental manner, not for the purpose of defining Christological doctrine, but solely to stimulate the Philippians by their Lord's sublime example of humility. It does not go beyond previous Pauline thought on the matter (cf. 2 Cor. viii. 9), but it has been a fruitful field of debate, and one of its expressions, ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε, has been the basis of some of the most important and vital theories regarding the Person of Christ. In

this Divine example, the beloved Philippians must anxiously labour to achieve that perfect salvation to which God Himself inspires them, approving themselves pure, guileless, and blessedly faithful in their influence, amid all their dark and ungodly surroundings. For their triumph will be the Apostle's crown in the day of Christ, and even if his life-blood be poured out as a libation along with the offering of their faith, it will only be the greater cause for their mutual congratulation and joy.

Here the Apostle pauses, and then turns again to speak of his own purposes and experiences (ii. 19–iii. 16). He says that as soon as he perceives how his trial will issue, he will send Timothy to visit them. They know Timothy well, and will welcome him. Would God there were others as unselfish and devoted as he! And ere very long Paul hopes to come himself. Meantime, however, he will send Epaphroditus, their kindly messenger, restored to them by God's grace from the very jaws of death, and worthy of all the love and honour they can bestow upon him.

At the beginning of the third chapter, the Apostle thinks of what more remains to be said, little indeed beyond what he has already written, either in this letter or in others. He will not omit to warn them of Jewish opponents whom he cannot refrain from speaking of with contempt, who shadow his afflicted life even in Rome, and who, whether they have yet shown themselves in Philippi or not, may certainly be anticipated there. He contrasts himself with them in a passage of intense interest. A Hebrew! He too is a Hebrew, and transcends them in all those proud matters of which they so confidently boast. But every one of such carnal distinctions he has counted loss for Christ. In Christ alone he desires to be found, radiant in no legal righteousness, but in that perfect righteousness which is of God by faith. It is the goal and consummation of all his hopes, not yet attained,

addition to discussions in the Commentaries, Gifford's *Incarnation* deals exclusively with the passage; but cf. also Bruce's *Humiliation of Christ;* Powell's *Principle of the Incarnation;* and Hall's *Kenotic Theory.*

but ever pressed for, the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And all who are of such a mind will be led of God, even in things where their views are dim and their steps uncertain, always provided that they never really turn aside from the Godward course.

Once more (iii. 17–iv. 9) Paul's thoughts turn very definitely to the Philippians, and to most earnest and loving counsels. He ventures to call them to follow his steps. Far be it from them to fall back among those, of whom he cannot speak without tears, whom he once hoped to gain for the kingdom, but who remain lawless, sensual and earthly, the enemies of the Cross. Rather let them ever remember that they are, with him, citizens of heaven, and that they have a glorious hope there at the appearance of their omnipotent Saviour. In Him they must stand fast, even as they are more dear and precious to Paul's heart than tongue can tell. Yea, he will now be very personal. He has heard of the estrangement of these two —Euodia and Syntyche. They have been very helpful and zealous, and perhaps their very zeal has betrayed them. He beseeches them to make up their quarrel, and entreats others to make it easy for them, especially him who is well named Syzygos, that is a yoke-fellow,[1] and Clement, and other fellow-labourers. Nothing will better conduce to harmony than to keep the eye fixed on Christ, and to rejoice in Him both now and in all stress that still may come. Let a gentle and enduring forbearance be their distinction. The Lord is nigh; why should they be filled with anxious cares? Let them confide in God, and His surpassing Peace, like a faithful sentinel, shall guard their hearts. Finally, summing up as Paul only can, in noble, elevating, and comprehensive words, he bids them fill their minds with all that is virtuous and worthy of praise, acting

[1] Such a play on the name would be quite in Paul's spirit (cf. Philemon, ver. 11), and yet we cannot say that there is more than probability in this interpretation. Renan suggests Lydia, but his theory, like many others, perishes on the rock of Greek grammar, for γνήσιε is masculine. His further suggestion (following some ancient traditions) that Lydia was Paul's wife, is quite at variance with the Apostle's words in 1 Cor. vii. 8.

out all he has ever told or shown them, and promises that the God of peace shall be with them.

Then come (iv. 10–end) the final words of gratitude for the gift which had refreshed him like a sweet spring. With tactful delicacy, maintaining his independence, yet covering them with praise, he pens this admirable passage. True though it be that his Lord ever suffices and will never see him fail, they have done well to remember his affliction. And their token of love is trebly precious because it is the flourishing again of their old goodness. They may be assured that even as they have supplied his wants, so his God shall supply all theirs, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. With simple doxology and benediction, enclosing salutations from all the brethren, chiefly "them that are of Cæsar's household,"[1] the winsome Epistle comes to an end.

We may now look back on these alternating passages, and bring together the parts of the twofold picture they present, first of the Philippians, and then of the Apostle.

1. Three things are conspicuous concerning the Philippians—their character, their troubles, and the counsels Paul thought it needful to give them.

(1) It is most interesting to reflect on a Church in which the Apostle found almost no fault or blemish. Nowhere, according to Renan, had he met with so much heart, nobleness, and simplicity. "As for Macedonia, it was probably the region the most honest, the most serious, the most sane in the ancient world."[2] Hausrath declares that Paul met "men" first at Philippi. He means to distinguish the Macedonian from the dreamy and languorous Asiatic, and from the fickle and irritable Greek. "The material was harder to work in, and offered somewhat stubborn resistance; but the work, once done, endured. The Macedonians became the phalanx of Pauline Christi-

[1] The 'domus Cæsaris' comprised the whole multitude of persons in the Emperor's service, whether slaves or freemen, so that there is no ground whatever for suggesting that Paul was proudly thinking of any converts of special distinction.

[2] *St. Paul*, p. 136.

anity, his 'fellow-soldiers,' as he calls them, whom he loves to address in military phrase. The firmness of character for which they became proverbial through centuries of the world's history, did not belie them now."[1] The Epistle perfectly reflects such characteristics. It pulses with affection, and even with admiration. 'Stand fast' and 'rejoice' are its watchwords, and strength and gentleness, fidelity and generosity, are the noble qualities it throws into relief. Nor was it that love had made Paul blind. The Philippians were friends whose adoption he proved ere he grappled them to his soul with hoops of steel. He ever found them his most devoted adherents, and they remained to the end dearly beloved and longed for.

(2) Yet the Philippians, like himself, had to endure a great fight of afflictions. It was not as parlour-soldiers he addressed them. Their panoply was needed, but not for parade. His own flesh had been lacerated in their forum, and no doubt he left them a legacy of persecution. It was not only the high looks or threatening words of their adversaries that could terrorise them. The world around them was pagan and superstitious, "crooked and perverse," and we can well believe that the waves of opposition sometimes broke over them in bloody spray. So great a price must they pay for their diadem; so intensely real was the rallying cry "to stand fast in rank and order."

But there is revealed also a trouble within the circle of their own Church life, and this is dealt with even more anxiously than the other. Paul always viewed internal dangers most seriously. He believed that, as with a man so with a Church, the deadliest foe is ever the one that lurks within. The danger now was not doctrinal; it was entirely personal. It was perhaps all the more likely to be factious and distressing on that account. Cross currents of jealousy and ambition, leading to the formation of rival parties and cliques, soon play havoc with congregational peace. This seems to have been the trouble that Paul sought to heal. He associates it with the names of Euodia

[1] *Time of the Apostles*, iii. 203–204.

and Syntyche, and he beseeches them to be reconciled. We know historically that women had great social freedom and influence in Macedonia, and their marked prominence in the Church of Philippi no doubt largely helped to give that Church its noble distinction of fidelity and generosity. But it also seems to have added an element of weakness, which produced the signs of cleavage so much deplored. Although their feelings or interests had thus unhappily clashed, Euodia and Syntyche were devoted workers, and Paul makes no distinction between them. He wishes both sides to remember that he is the friend of both, and it is impossible to doubt but that an appeal so touchingly made would be successful. If he did indeed visit Philippi again, it must surely have been to find his joy fulfilled.

(3) The counsels of the Apostle naturally run along the line of the troubles, both those present and those that may be foreseen.

With earnest emotion he pleads for concord, and points out that the only way to it is by lowliness and self-effacement. Never was the grace of humility more closely pressed on the conscience, or its excellence more divinely displayed. The marvellous example of Christ would strike every hearer dumb. Vainglory and pride would perish in that sublime appeal, and the heart that could harden against it would straightway un-Christianise itself.

Again, the conflict and pressure of the dark and alien world give rise to recurring calls to fidelity. The Christian life is strenuous and in the open field, and its movements are the quick and alert movements of the arena. "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue," says Milton, "unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and seeks her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat." This also was the mind of Paul, and the note he sounded to the Macedonians. The "dogs" who trouble him so much may not yet bite and devour in Philippi, but they will come; and even now there are in plenty those friends of the old pagan life who would draw his readers

back into the maelström. The Philippians must therefore keep before them the high standards of the spiritual life. They must remember that the power most expulsive of evil is nourished by things true, honourable, just, pure, lovable, and of good report. It is theirs to sanctify themselves by working out the good which God works in. Nor towards the unconverted world must they be merely antagonistic. They must strive to attract by the winsomeness of their forbearance. Never will they be the 'light' of which Jesus spoke, if they rouse no admiration by their readiness to succour and forgive, or if they neglect to hold out the word of life to the perverse. The world needs them more to help it up than to frown it down, and strength is not to be interpreted as the contradiction of sweetness and light. It has been well said: "Were there no one prompt to help a brother first, and find out afterwards whether he were worthy; no one willing to drown his private wrongs in pity for the wronger's person; no one ready to be duped many a time rather than live always on suspicion; no one glad to treat individuals passionately and impulsively rather than by general rules of prudence; the world would be an infinitely worse place than it is now to live in. The tender grace, not of a day that is dead, but of a day yet to be born somehow, with the golden rule grown natural, would be cut out from the perspective of our imaginations." [1]

Lastly, Paul never wearies in calling the Philippians to rejoice. The source of their joy is inexhaustible, for it is "in the Lord." The clouds have doubtless gathered darkly, and the horizon may be blacker still. He himself is near the sword, and the life of their beloved messenger has been hanging in the balance. It is not surprising if they have felt a little despondent. Nevertheless, they must the more earnestly fix their eyes upon Christ. Their gladness proceeds from the Light that is ever rising, never setting. Through Him at last they shall enter into un-

[1] Prof. James, Gifford Lectures on *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p 356.

clouded joy. For "after the fever of life, after wearinesses and sicknesses, fightings and despondings, languor and fretfulness, struggling and succeeding; after all the changes and chances of this troubled, unhealthy state,—at length comes death, at length the white throne of God, at length the beatific vision." [1]

2. Further, the Epistle is like a window into the Apostle's own bosom. It lets us see how wondrously he triumphed in his bonds, how impossible it was for suffering to embitter his heart, or to shake his confidence in Christ.

(1) In the first place, his magnanimity with regard to his opponents in Rome is very striking. It shows not only how he had mellowed and broadened, but how justly he measured the proportion of things. It is true his adversaries, though Jewish, were not of the extreme type that threatened the very life of Christianity in Galatia. They did not strike at fundamental doctrines, or seek to propagate anything essentially different from his own message. For he says they "preached Christ." Their antagonism was rather to himself than to his Lord. He acknowledged the difference. Galling as it might be to be personally depreciated and despised, he was able to look above such an experience, and therein he showed his greatness. It was the greatness of him who said: "He must increase, but I must decrease." Roman Christianity was not to be altogether within Paul's grasp, or moulded entirely to his mind. In many ways it might develop away from lines to which he was devoted. He could not be blind to this tendency, even at so very early a stage, yet it did not disconcert him. All that he could think of now, amid the tumult and passion of that great Babylon, was that the name of Christ was heard, and that it was being proclaimed by many tongues. He could only wish Godspeed to such a work. He had the magnanimity to say: 'There are many who do not quite think as I do, and I regret the spirit they sometimes display, yet they keep

[1] J. H. Newman, cit. M. Arnold, *Discourses in America* (1885), p. 140.

ever raising the one living issue, and therein I do rejoice, yea and will rejoice.'

And there were other classes of men opposed to him, of whom he also speaks, of some sharply, and of others sadly. It is not easy to account for the swift transition, in the third chapter, to the 'dogs' of the concision. It may have been due to some experience so recent and poignant that it forced a reference to his lips. It seems correct to think that he had in his mind some episode that concerned himself at Rome, and that those guilty of offence were unbelieving Jews.[1] We know how widely spread they were in Rome, and how bitter and persistent they were in their opposition to the Christians. The fault now thought of was their spiritual and ceremonial pride. It rouses the Apostle's ire and contempt. For he was able to speak of all that from the inside. He had been everything they boasted of being. He had possessed the distinctions on which they doted. And what were they all? Dust beneath his feet compared with Christ. And what could they accomplish? Nothing, and less than nothing, compared with the perfect righteousness of faith. For a moment Gospel and Law flash over against each other, and are seen on opposite sides; but it is because the adherents of the Law proudly refuse to recognise the Divine grace, and to pass on to the freer life that would be its fulfilment.

It is true this message of a freer life was a snare to some. It had always been misunderstood, and was so now. Some men had listened to Paul's preaching, and the only word they caught from his lips was "liberty." With that they turned away, and perverted it to their own destruction. They had heard but half, and, obeying only half, became the enemies of the whole. Their case is so sad that Paul

[1] Such is the very general opinion. Weiss indeed speaks of it as "universally admitted," *Introduction*, i. 364 n. Cf. also Lipsius, *Hand-Comm.*, p. 234: "Jewish fanatics who persecuted the preachers of the gospel." So also McGiffert, *Apos. Age*, p. 390. Weizsäcker and some others, however, think the reference is to Judaising Christians in Philippi, *Apos. Age* ii. 135.

cannot speak of it without weeping. For what can be sadder than to turn the truth so as to make it a lie? to wrest some great word of a pure and holy religion so that it becomes the very minister of evil? The world has seen this spectacle in every age and in many forms. Men have talked of liberty when what they meant was licence, and, instead of being free, have become sevenfold more enslaved than before.

(2) Finally, the Epistle is very eloquent of the triumph of faith. This is a recurrent note in all our reflections on the career of the Apostle. But it is so conspicuous here that it is impossible to pass it over. Few men, in so sad a case as Paul's, would have maintained so brave a front, or would have so resolutely persisted in recognising the bright side. The furtherance of the gospel; the sanctifying of his own life; the happiness with Christ in glory, which may be near, or, if it please his Lord better, the blessedness of continuing to serve others; the mark for the prize to which he presses with such zest, and which gleams so brightly in his vision: these shine on his page like stars, and make all the darkness light. Living, he finds what delights him; dying, he will find it still more. If he is abased, he is content; when he abounds, he does not misunderstand. On the high places his feet do not slip, and in the valley he does not stumble. It is a supreme achievement to live a life so poised and centred in Christ. Fragile and limited as he is, there is nothing he dare not face, no adversity that will overwhelm him, because of the strength his Lord imparts. We think of Seneca's great saying, and find it exemplified: "Vere magnum, habere fragilitatem hominis, securitatem Dei"; it is truly great to have in one the frailty of a man, and the security of a God. Never can we cease to rejoice that the afflicted Apostle attained this greatness, and that for our hope it pleased God to enable him to make his ideal present fact. We read again his brave words, and they infuse new courage into the blood. They come from prison walls, and from a sea of troubles, but they reveal the heart unbroken, and the faith undimmed. They show how all hindrances may

be overcome, and every trial surmounted. Nay, had the furnace not been so fierce, the gold would not have shone so brightly. It is the day of adversity that has brought out the lustre and the gleam.

"Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!"

# IV.

# THE PASTORAL EPISTLES.

I. TIMOTHY.

TITUS.

II. TIMOTHY.

Paul's living utterance makes itself heard in these severe and lofty tones, not that of some actor on the ecclesiastical stage who has assumed his mask, some impostor hidden under the dead lion's skin. Words, thoughts, spirit in these letters alike speak for their great author—great in his latest work, wise and far-seeing in his care for the flock of Christ, skilful to fence its fold against the approaching wolves, as he had been mighty in word and doctrine in those wondrous years when he founded Gentile Christendom, and built up the imperishable fabric of the New Testament theology. The second century never spoke as these Epistles speak. By their voice we discover the Apostle still alive, when all other clear record of him has perished amid the confusion of the latter years of Nero's rule. He has lived, happily, to send to the Church out of that time of fear and darkness a last watchword,—his message of farewell to the men he trusted most, and to us all through them. It is a word full of hope, and full of solemn warning,—a message of discipline, of courage, and of unchanging faith in Christ.—**Findlay.**

# THE PASTORAL EPISTLES.

## I.

## THE EPISTLES AND CRITICISM.

THE Epistle to Titus and the two to Timothy are usually grouped together under the title of the Pastorals, a name not strictly appropriate, yet sufficiently warranted by the fact that they consist largely of counsels to those engaged in the discharge of ministerial duties.[1] Although they are addressed to individuals, the nature and importance of the matters they deal with give them an interest to the whole Church, and it is scarcely likely their author anticipated that their mission would end in their private reception.

Timothy and Titus, though Paul's juniors by many years, were his intimate friends and associates. It is probable that they both owed their conversion to him, Timothy at Lystra, and Titus at Antioch. Timothy especially was closely related to him during a very long period. He accompanied him on his travels with but little interruption from the time of the second missionary journey to the Roman imprisonment. He was associated with him in the writing of several important Epistles, and was from time to time entrusted with various delicate and responsible missions. He was never regarded, however,

[1] According to Zahn, the employment of this title can be traced no farther back than to Anton (1753), Wegscheider (1810), and Eichhorn (1812). *Einleitung*, i. 445.

merely as a fellow-helper or assistant, but rather as a son tenderly beloved, the centre of many hopes, anxiously cared for and counselled. He seems to have been of a gentle and sympathetic nature, not perhaps very self-reliant, needing to be strengthened and encouraged in the face of men, yet of unquestionable fidelity and readiness to be spent for the cause of the friend he loved. Titus is hitherto known only by references made to him in Galatians and 2 Corinthians. He also was a loyal "partner and fellow-helper," as staunch as the other, and evidently of somewhat greater strength of character, though he never roused quite the same warmth of personal affection. He rendered the Apostle distinguished service at a critical time by being the bearer of his First Epistle to the Corinthians, when he acquitted himself so admirably as to merit high eulogy in the Second Epistle. He could be implicitly relied on to represent the Apostle with tact and judgment, and was well worthy of being called a "strong support of the Faith, and the clear utterance of the tongue of St. Paul."

The First Epistle to Timothy presents itself as directed to him in Ephesus, encouraging him to continue there in a much-needed mission of steadfast evangelical teaching and orderly consolidation. Evidently he was in a difficult position, and the task entrusted to him seemed almost beyond his power, and was perhaps also against his disposition. The outstanding element of concern was the presence of false teaching of a peculiar and mischievous kind. This teaching is immediately dealt with, and is never lost sight of throughout the Epistle. In the first place, it is represented as a different doctrine from the Apostle's, put forth by those who have swerved from the faith, who gave heed to fables and genealogies, and who wished to appear as teachers of the Law, although they were ignorant of the most elementary purposes for which the Law existed (ch. i.). Further on (ch. iv.), the asceticisms of this teaching, 'forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats,' are denounced, and godliness is commended instead as the true asceticism of the spirit.

Once more (ch. vi.), it is spoken of as a haughty and ignorant logomachy, leading to envy and strife, and above all, to avarice, seducing and corrupting men by the ruinous love of gain. Finally (close of the Epistle), it is condemned as profane and vain babbling, dealing with scholastic 'antitheses' or 'oppositions' under the specious pretence of superior 'knowledge.' Timothy is earnestly exhorted to do everything in his power to counteract this false teaching, and he is particularly counselled how to bear himself in certain cardinal matters. It is important, in the first place, that public worship should be well regulated and looked after (ch. ii.); above all, that intercessory prayer should not be restricted, and that women's part in the sanctuary should be one of modesty and silence. Again, it is of moment that the office-bearers of the Church should be men of irreproachable life, and therefore the moral qualities that should be conspicuous in bishops, deacons, and such women as act officially, are particularly defined (ch. iii.). Once more, no matter is more difficult and delicate, or fraught with better results, than the correct attitude of one in authority to all sorts and conditions of men and women in the congregation; and accordingly earnest hints and counsels are given, bearing on relations to the aged and the young, both men and women, especially to those widows who were worthy of charity and those who rendered service to the Church, and also to proselytes and slaves (chs. v.–vi. 2). Timothy is particularly charged with authority to judge the elders, but warned to be cautious and impartial. He is, throughout the Epistle, addressed with much friendly consideration, and yet there is evident anxiety as to his conduct in the whole situation; appeals to him are couched in the most solemn terms, and the whole tone is firm and decided, almost peremptory and commanding. There are no greetings in the Epistle, and but little reference to personal relations of any kind. Neither is there any indication of where or when the letter was written, although it may be gathered that Paul was at liberty, and that he probably had accomplished the journey to Macedonia which he refers to at the beginning.

The Second Epistle to Timothy finds that disciple in much the same situation as the First. He is apparently in Asia Minor, and in the presence of the same difficulties regarding false teachers. But with the writer the situation has altogether changed. The Apostle writes from prison in Rome, with a dark and ominous outlook. The bonds have tightened round him; he is lonely and almost friendless; and he ardently longs for the sympathetic presence of his beloved disciple in view of a clearly approaching end. The whole Epistle is very personal and tender. It opens with grateful and affectionate memories of the past, and exhorts Timothy to stir up his gift and not to be ashamed of the glorious gospel, to remember the Apostle both in his teachings and sufferings, and to be ready himself to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. The false teaching is still 'profane babbling,' and the enemy of godliness; it maintains, moreover, that the resurrection is already past, and overthrows the faith of some. It is best to be met by a pure and gracious life, by avoiding controversy and foolish questions, and by clinging in faith and love to the old and well-known message, Paul's own pattern of sound words. No mention is made of office-bearers, further than that Timothy is enjoined to hand on the truth he has received to faithful men who will teach it to others in their turn. The distinctive feature of his own ministry is described as the work of an evangelist, and the right handling of the word of truth. References to suffering and persecution are frequent and sad, and lurid clouds are descried on the horizon of the Church's history. The Apostle foresees that grievous times will come in what he calls the 'last days'; the stormy petrels of those times are already present in the form of men of motley hue whom the servant of God must shun, men guilty of notorious and scandalous vices, corrupt in mind and reprobate concerning the faith. Nevertheless Paul is not despondent. He is confident that the career of those who harass the faithful will be checked, and their folly manifested to all men. Personally he has nothing to regret, nothing to fear. In noble and

touching language, from which the note of triumph is not absent, he speaks of his finished course, his well-fought fight. He has everything joyfully to anticipate from the "righteous Judge." Then, in spite of the fact that he has just dealt largely with work that Timothy must accomplish in his distant charge, the yearning heart of the Apostle calls his friend to his side, and repeats the call. The Epistle closes with many greetings, and with news of the disciples, old friends and new, some of them at work in familiar places, and some, like Titus, pioneering in new ground.[1] The frequent flitting of light and shade harmonises well with the whole situation. It is exactly such a letter as we could suppose the brave heart would have written in the circumstances. As Reuss justly remarks, it is all absolutely natural, an effusion that at once evokes sympathy and disarms criticism.[2]

The Third Epistle of the group is addressed to Titus, who is at work in Crete according to the directions of the Apostle. The island of Crete had been part of a Roman province for about a hundred years, and Jewish emigrants had probably settled in it for a much longer period (since 362 B.C.). There were Cretans present at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, but the origin of Christianity in the island cannot be traced. It is possible that missionaries may have visited it during Paul's labours in Ephesus; but the only mention in Acts connected with Crete is when the vessel that bore him a prisoner is described as detained there by the storm. Paul, however, had evidently been on the island, accompanied by Titus, shortly before the Epistle was written. He was struck with the imperfect organisation of the Churches, and general defects of their Christian life. These defects were shared in by only too many communities of the time, but Paul indicates that there was also a special Cretan taint, due to the notoriously low character of the islanders. He thought it of high

[1] The tradition is that Crescens went to Gaul (Galatia); Titus to Dalmatia. Paul of course had himself been in Illyria (Rom. xv. 19).

[2] *Les Épîtres pauliniennes*, p. 249.

importance to leave Titus behind him, with authority to organise and direct this imperfect type of Christianity, and the letter was written mainly for his friend's guidance and encouragement. At the same time Titus cannot be spared for long. Paul summons him to join him at Nicopolis (in Epirus) for the winter, and promises that his place shall then be taken either by Artemas or Tychicus. There is no indication where Paul himself was at the time of writing. He was not yet at Nicopolis. Probably he was in Greece, and it may be inferred from the mention of Apollos that he was in Corinth.

The Epistle is clear and definite in purpose, practical and business-like. It opens with a rather long and uncommon preamble, such as only the Apostle himself would have ventured upon, and then immediately proceeds to give directions for the proper organisation of the Churches. Apparently Cretan Christianity was as yet too poorly developed to require deacons; at all events they are not mentioned. Attention is solely given to the office of the elder or presbyter, who is also styled a bishop, in virtue no doubt of his supervising function. Stress is above all laid on his moral qualifications, what he must and must not be, and also on his knowledge of the faithful doctrine he has been taught, and on his ability to expound and defend it. For there are those against whom it must be defended, false teachers who must be rebuked and silenced. They do great injury in Christian families, and are venal and self-seeking, striving to serve both God and Mammon. They give heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men, and, professing in their austerities to honour God, they really misrepresent Him, and are reprobate unto every good work. Later on (ch. iii. 9), they are noted as dealing with foolish questions, genealogies, contentions and strivings about the law. As heretical, that is, as men who cause division among the faithful, they are to be vigorously admonished, and, if impenitent, to be shunned altogether. The second chapter is entirely devoted to good counsel for regulating the conduct of the different classes in the Christian community. Those specified are the aged men and women,

young women, young men—to whom the pastor himself must be a conspicuous example—and finally the slaves, who seem everywhere to have felt the appeal of the gospel. These are all directed to pure and lofty ideals, that they may adorn the Divine doctrine, and live a sober, righteous, and godly life; for inevitably those who have been redeemed will also be zealous of good works. The last chapter deals with the relation of the converts to the still unconverted world, basing their good and gentle conduct on that which makes the change in all Christians, the saving grace of God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Finally, the Epistle closes with kindly greetings, and the commendation to Titus and his people of hospitality and good works.

It cannot be denied that there is something very natural about these Epistles. Nothing is more likely than that the Apostle should have written letters to friends and colleagues so dear and indispensable. Moreover, it is just what we should expect, to find him taking doctrine largely for granted, and dealing rather with practical matters, the phases of Christian life and work that presented themselves at the moment, or that might be expected sooner or later to develop. Further, this would be all the more natural if the letters were written far on in his career, when he could not but be conscious that the care of the Churches must soon fall into other hands.

The testimony of sub-apostolic literature to the early existence of the Epistles, cannot justly be said to be unfavourable. "We find them," says Weiss, "exercising an early and widely extended influence on ecclesiastical literature; nor is there any perceptible difference in the case of any one in frequency of usage, which is about proportioned to their length."[1] No great stress should be laid on a few brief resemblances in Barnabas and Clement of Rome, which, if admitted as references or quotations, would carry us back to the close of the first century. As Holtzmann says, these might be due simply to a common

[1] *Introduction*, i. 203.

ecclesiastical atmosphere.[1] But the testimony becomes clearer in Ignatius and Polycarp,[2] the latter of whom had beyond question seen the Epistles and turned them to account.[3] Here, therefore, we have a sure *terminus ad quem*. Later in the second century, in the Peshito and Old Latin Version, the Muratorian Fragment, Irenæus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria, their acceptance as Pauline and canonical is perfectly explicit. On the other hand, they are omitted from Marcion's canon, though nothing greatly adverse can be drawn from such an omission. Marcion was notoriously governed by strong dogmatic prepossessions in his treatment of the New Testament writings; moreover, from Tertullian's profession of surprise at his rejection of the Pastorals while he accepted Philemon (*ad unum hominem*), it may be inferred that his main reason for rejection was the private character of the Epistles.[4] So far, therefore, as external testimony goes, it may be concluded, with some slight degree of probability, that the Epistles were known by the end of the first century; and, with certainty, that they were known and accepted by the middle of the second. Even if this testimony were weaker than it is, we should make some allowance, as Wace points out, for the fact that, after all, personal letters are not on the same footing as public documents. It is unnecessary, however, to go minutely into this part of the subject, because it is now generally admitted that the question of authenticity must be determined entirely by internal considerations.

[1] *Pastoralbriefe*, p. 259.

[2] The witness of Ignatius belongs to the second decade of the second century. He died about the year 110. Polycarp died about 155. This is the date adopted by Waddington, Lightfoot, Nestle, and others. But neither the date of his death, nor that of his Epistle to the Philippians, can be fixed with absolute certainty. Both Ritschl and Harnack give the letter far too late a date (140). It links itself to the death of Ignatius. Polycarp is supposed to have been a centenarian at the time of his martyrdom.

[3] Von Soden, *Hand-Comm.*, p. 155; Clemen, *Einheitlichkeit*, p. 174. Holtzmann, Jülicher, and Davidson, also agree as to their certain use by Polycarp.

[4] Cf. Sanday, *Inspiration*, pp. 19 and 364.

The Christian centuries, until the beginning of the nineteenth, found no fault with the Pastorals on account of their contents. The three Epistles, like their companions in the canon, were universally revered for their authority and intrinsic merit. This itself is not a little in their favour, and can only be dismissed on the lofty presumption that until this late age they were never studied with any real insight or intelligence. But when doubts were once raised, it must be confessed they grew apace; and it is rather disconcerting to find a long succession of scholars, of many various schools, giving their deliberate verdict against the Epistles. To some extent it has perhaps been felt that as no essential doctrines of faith are at stake, it is permissible to treat the Pastorals more or less cavalierly. The issues raised, however, are as important as they are difficult and complex. They can by no means be said to be settled; many of them are in a state of somewhat delicate balance; and, though decided opinions are not lacking on either side, it will frequently appear that finalities are reached by the oversight or neglect of important factors.

The history of criticism has often been sketched, and only a few words are necessary to recall it. Schleiermacher (1807), if not absolutely the first to raise doubts, was the first to give them force. He rejected 1 Timothy chiefly on grounds of history and style. He was soon followed by Eichhorn, and by De Wette, who, however, found the criticism valid against all three. The Epistles are so obviously bound together by common and distinctive features, that it has become conventional to say that they stand or fall together. This may be said to be the general judgment of scholars, and yet it ought not to be assumed as axiomatic. In addition to Schleiermacher, critics like Bleek, Neander, Ritschl, and Reuss accept 2 Timothy alone; and many who would not go so far as wholly to accept the Epistle, nevertheless regard it as standing favourably by itself.

Of all the attacks upon the Epistles the most formidable was that of Baur (1835). The importance of his criticism

lay in the fact that it was not merely negative but constructive. That is to say, he endeavoured to account for the existence of the Epistles, and to give them their historical setting. In his idea they were pseudonymous anti-Gnostic documents of the latter half of the second century, written particularly to oppose the heresies of Marcion, to confirm the unity and episcopal constitution of the Church, and also, in their modified Paulinism, to furnish an eirenicon between supposed Petrine and Pauline parties.[1] This theory long held the field among negative critics, and even now is not discarded in general principle, although several of its details, particularly the very late date and the recognition of a definite Gnosticism, have been largely resiled from. Mangold, Meyer, Holtzmann, Weizsäcker, Jülicher, Beyschlag, Davidson, and Hatch, with various concessions, virtually regard the Epistles from Baur's standpoint. All along, however, in addition to many who continued to hold the traditional view, there were those who, while unable to accept the Epistles as they stand, were not prepared for their absolute rejection. There seemed to them insuperable objections historically to an entirely pseudonymous origin, not to speak of passages so decidedly stamped with the genius of the Apostle as to make it almost impossible to attribute them to any other pen. Accordingly, there is the hypothesis of interpolation and compilation, a kind of *via media* which has at the present day many able upholders. These recognise in the Epistles certain fragments of genuine Pauline letters, which a later writer has used in order to give verisimilitude to opinions that he wished to be accepted as apostolic. The application of the theory has varied in its results in the hands of each individual writer, and the residuum of general consent is very small. Among those favourable to it in varying degrees are Credner, Hitzig, Ewald, Immer, Hausrath, Krenkel, Hesse, Pfleiderer, Harnack, Renan, Sabatier, Réville, Von Soden, Lemme, Knoke, Clemen, McGiffert, Bacon, Moffatt. Writers who, with more or

[1] *Paul*, ii. 98 sqq. ; *Church History*, i. 127–128.

less thoroughness and acknowledgment of difficulty, still adhere to the authenticity as a whole, include Zahn, Weiss, Huther, Godet, Bertrand, Spitta, Steinmetz, Lightfoot, Hort, Wace, Sanday, Salmon, Humphreys, Plummer, Gilbert, Macpherson, Ramsay, Bernard, Dods, Farrar, Conybeare and Howson, Adeney, Alford, P. Fairbairn, Plumptre, Findlay. Dr. Moffatt is therefore scarcely warranted in saying that 'criticism' is practically unanimous on a date about the beginning of the second century. Such an exclusive appropriation of the word 'criticism' is probably due to extreme familiarity with the modern Teutonic manner, but it clangs the door rather unceremoniously in the face of a large number of otherwise respectable people, who are at least entitled to an opinion, and who have long passed the stage of the primer and the handbook. 'Best' and 'most reasonable' criticism is naturally the criticism with which a writer agrees, but this too often exhausts the meaning of the adjectives.

## II.

## AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLES.

The internal grounds on which the denial of the authenticity is based, are twofold, literary and historical. The historical issues are raised by the three questions: Can the Epistles be fitted into Paul's life? Is the theological position consistent with his authorship? Are the ecclesiastical views too advanced for his age? That is to say, this class of objections has to deal with Paul's personal history, the history of doctrine, and the history of Church polity.

### (A) Literary Characteristics.

These have been subjected to very keen scrutiny, and yet deductions from such premisses ought to be made with great caution. Critics have frequently gone far astray in

deciding the authorship of anonymous writings of contemporaries, who were otherwise well known and who assumed no deceptive style, and the air of dogmatic certainty regarding writings of the first century is apt to be a delusion and a snare.[1] Lightfoot in his *Biblical Essays* deals with the literary features of the Pastorals, but chiefly to deduce the conclusions, that all three belong to much the same time, and that a considerable period must be interposed between them and the other Paulines. Sabatier strongly argues in the same way that the Epistles, if Paul's, must have come together, and cannot admit of any other Pauline between them. So much, it is generally allowed, the literary qualities make certain, but the question of authenticity remains. Baur believed that the literary test told against the genuineness of the Epistles, although he did not make it his chief objection. Holtzmann, however, regards it as perfectly decisive. His seventh chapter is devoted to this part of the subject, and is a masterpiece of detailed discussion. He holds that the Pastorals are in vocabulary and diction further apart from the whole body of the accepted Epistles, than Thessalonians, the earliest, is from Philippians, the latest.[2] Their differences are so manifold, and at once so obvious and so subtle, that their total effect entirely precludes the possibility of Pauline authorship. He is ably answered by Professor Findlay, both on particular and general grounds, in the appendix to Sabatier's *Paul*;[3] and Professor Ramsay has also, while confuting him on other lines, objected to the unscientific

[1] Illustration of the difficulty occurs continually in the case of magazine articles. Cf. also the impossibility of distinguishing the individual contributions to the collaborations of Besant and Rice; or the story of *The Daughter of Heth* and the *Saturday Review*, as told in Sir Wemyss Reid's *Life of William Black*. Leslie Stephen, in his *George Eliot*, relates that when that writer published *Scenes of Clerical Life* Thackeray believed the author to be a man, Dickens guessed a woman, while Mrs. Carlyle (precursor of the subtle literary critics of the Bible) suggested something more complex, "first cousin to a clergyman, with a wife from whom he got the 'beautiful feminine touches'" (p. 55).

[2] *Pastoralbriefe*, p. 104.

[3] Pp. 353-362. Also most acutely by Bertrand, *Essai critique sur l'authenticité des Épîtres pastorales*.

and unhistorical use he makes of analogies to writings of a later period.[1] On the whole, Holtzmann's discussion, able and learned as it is, leaves the impression that it is overdone, and his elaboration of minute details raises distrust of the whole method. It seems an effort to win by mass, rather than by any great cogency of evidence.

All that is said of the vocabulary is matter of fact and beyond dispute.[2] According to Holtzmann (p. 86), there are over 897 words in the Pastoral Epistles; of these, 171 are not found elsewhere in the New Testament, and 133 are not found elsewhere in Paul's writings.[3] Every other book has, of course, its own share of peculiar expressions. Many changes of such a kind may no doubt be accounted for by the emergence of fresh subjects or fresh thoughts regarding old subjects, by the parties addressed, by the mood of the moment, or by recent impressions from men and books.[4] Here, however, the proportion is so very great as to arrest attention.

Mr. W. P. Workman, in an interesting paper in the *Expository Times*,[5] has very clearly brought out this proportion as compared with that in the other letters of Paul. If we take uniform pages of the Greek Testament, Titus and 1 Timothy are found to have 13, and 2 Timothy 12, peculiar words to the page; Philippians has 6·8; and so on, in generally decreasing ratio as the Epistles are

[1] *Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 248 n.

What Macaulay said of Lord Bacon may be applied to Holtzmann: "In wit, if by wit be meant the power of perceiving analogies between things which appear to have nothing in common, he never had an equal. He possessed this faculty, or rather this faculty possessed him, to a morbid degree. . . . But, like several eminent men whom we could name, both living and dead, he sometimes appeared strangely deficient in the power of distinguishing rational from fanciful analogies, analogies which are arguments from analogies which are mere illustrations."

[2] The full list of peculiarities is given in Grimm-Thayer, pp. 706–707.

[3] Of course it is not meant that Paul could not have been familiar with these words. Nearly half of them occur in the Septuagint.

[4] It is said there are traces of 2 Maccabees in the Pastorals. But there is really nothing remarkable in that. The attempt to make capital of such small matters actually weakens the case.

[5] VII. 418.

earlier in date, until the lowest proportion, 3·6, is found in 2 Thessalonians. That is to say, the Pastoral Epistles "present twice as many unusual words as any other of Paul's, and three times as many as most." Mr. Workman takes this as an illustration of a general principle, namely, that the number of unusual words in the writings of any author is a very variable quantity, and that even a variation so great as 3 to 1 is not extraordinary. He supports this by reference to Shakespeare. Using the lists of words that occur only once (*ἅπαξ λεγόμενα*), given at the end of the plays in the Irving edition, he shows that the proportion in Shakespeare varies from 3·4 to 10·4 per page. The writers are of course very dissimilar; but he is not comparing Paul with Shakespeare. He is comparing Paul with Paul, and Shakespeare with Shakespeare. He shows that each is an illustration of his general principle.

The argument is legitimate and forcible, and could easily be extended. Let us take, for example, the case of Milton. Professor Masson, in his edition of Milton, brings out some striking facts regarding the poet's vocabulary and self-variation.[1] In *L'Allegro* Milton shows only 10 per cent. of non-Saxon words; in *Il Penseroso*, he shows 17 per cent.; and in *Paradise Lost*, in Book VI., 20 per cent., and in other places even 30. Further, the Professor remarks on the general question that "the *ἅπαξ λεγόμενα* of any writer will be found on examination greatly more numerous than might have been supposed beforehand." Under the letter A alone, he finds in the concordances 118 words that occur only once in Milton's poems; and of 375 words beginning with the letters *Un*, no fewer than 241 occur only once. "Altogether I should not be surprised," he adds, "if between 2,000 and 3,000 of the 8,000 words of Milton's total poetical vocabulary were found to be *ἅπαξ λεγόμενα*." If we take similar tests in the case of Shelley,[2] we get the following results: under the letter A, excluding proper names, there are some 639 words, and of these 295 occur only once; while of

[1] *Poetical Works*, i. ix–xiii.

[2] Ellis's *Concordance*, 1892.

words beginning with *Un*, which are 478 in number, no less than 266 are but once used.

Beyschlag is impatient that the question of authenticity should be any further discussed; it is at least permissible to hope to hear much less of ἅπαξ λεγόμενα in connection with it. Nor should we fail to observe that argument from a strange vocabulary rather cuts the opposite way. A large number of peculiar words and phrases is just what an imitator, such as certain theories suppose, would have most sedulously avoided. He would rather have sought to lull suspicion by a continuous parade of familiar and characteristic expressions. In fact, the only man who can afford to differ largely from previous compositions is the author himself.

A more important matter than the vocabulary is the literary form, the general style and structure of the Epistles. Lightfoot recognises that the syntax is "stiffer and more regular than in the earlier Epistles, more jointed and less flowing"; also that "there is a greater sententiousness, an abruptness and positiveness of form." It is practically conceded by writers on the positive side that there is a marked difference in style as compared with the usual sustained force and intensity of the earlier writings; not that flashes of the old brilliancy of expression, or verses palpitating with emotion and moving with natural pathos, are altogether absent, but that on the whole the construction is more loose and inconsequent, and the utterance more tame and prolix, than Paul has accustomed us to. The question is as to the inference to be drawn from the facts. Few deny that a man's style may vary, but is it possible to account for variations so pronounced as these in the short interval of a few years? It is a hazardous thing to dogmatise on such a question. If Paul dictated the letters, then, to use Renan's phrase, we have a kind of "stenographed conversation," and it is possible that the amanuensis, perhaps a new one, whom the Apostle trusted to put his message into form, may have been responsible for a good deal. In addressing familiar friends, too, a certain latitude would be allowable;

there would be no need felt for great precision, and the cropping up of familiar and of crystallised expressions and watchwords, well known to both parties, would be perfectly natural. Besides, weariness and ill-health, gloomy prospects and growing years and cares, might all be important factors in the case. A better knowledge of the details of the situation might reveal to us influences that would explain everything. All such matters are conjectural, but if not in themselves unreasonable, they certainly ought to be permitted to relieve the pressure of the adverse argument. Here also we must remember that that argument has a double edge. What are we to think of an imitator who so perversely neglected to imitate? and who, with so jejune a performance, hoped to palm off his utterances as those of the most brilliant leader of the Church? Moreover, we ought not to exaggerate the faults. The Pauline ring is well recognised in occasional passages. Davidson goes to extremes in his wholesale condemnation of the Epistles as "without vigour, point, spiritual depth or richness." He forgets even to be consistent; for just before his bizarre assertion that the style cannot be considered authentic "without disparagement to the Apostle's intellect," he has remarked that "the language of the Epistles is generally superior to Paul's in clearness." Renan[1] thought some of the passages "so beautiful" that he was constrained to ask whether authentic Pauline letters must not have been in the hands of the imitator. Sabatier declares that neither in form nor substance are the Epistles unworthy of the great Apostle;[2] further, he simply repudiates the notion that any "contemporary of Justin Martyr" ever wrote the first and last chapters of 2 Timothy.[3] Dr. Moffatt has no admiration for the style of the Pastorals; he finds it radically un-Pauline, and cites the strongest utterances of Jülicher and Holtzmann against it. Yet he quotes with approval a passage of Simcox', in the course of which it is said that the Epistles

[1] *L'Église chrétienne*, p. 95.
[2] *Paul*, p. 269.
[3] Cit. Bertrand, *Essai critique*, p. 11.

are "so ancient and so like Paul"; and, earlier, in asserting a common atmosphere for them and the writings of the apostolic Fathers, he says that the Pastorals are "astonishingly superior." As they are regarded as practically identical in matter, the superiority presumably lies in the style. If so, the witness is true, and the comparison suggestive. The sub-apostolic writings are well known. Let the Pastorals be read along with any of them, and it will be strange if the result even in regard to style is not as surprising as Dr. Moffatt says. Godet's judgment may be rhetorically expressed, but it would be difficult to gainsay its truth:—"When one has had enough of the pious amplifications of Clement of Rome, of the ridiculous inanities of Barnabas, of the genial oddities of Ignatius, of the well-meant commonplaces of Polycarp, of the intolerable verbiage of Hermas, and of the nameless platitudes of the Didaché,—and after this promenade in the first decade of the second century, reverts to our Pastoral Epistles, one will measure the distance that separates the least striking products of the apostolic literature from what has been preserved to us as most eminent in the ancient patristic literature."[1]

There is still, however, a matter that may here find most convenient notice. Do the Pastorals harmonise with the supposition that Paul is writing to his most intimate friends, the one in Ephesus, and the other in Crete? Are they natural in such a case, or do they in any way offend our sense of the fitness of things?

With regard to 2 Timothy there need be few doubts. Take it all in all it corresponds admirably with the situation, and Reuss was justified in saying that had it stood alone there would probably never have been any talk of the second century. Neither does the Epistle to Titus seem out of the way, if we consider that the Churches in Crete were but of recent origin, and that Paul as he wrote was addressing himself quite as much to them as to the disciple whose hands he wished to strengthen.

[1] *Introduction*, p. 600.

It is with regard to 1 Timothy and the Ephesian Church that most difficulty is felt. The tone is strangely pædagogic. Timothy is addressed as an immature youth who needs very elementary lessons in life and duty, and whose authority and capacity are somewhat uncertain; and yet he had been a long time in Ephesus and under Paul's personal influence, and had been entrusted with responsible tasks both among the Macedonian Churches and in Corinth. It also sounds strange that to him above all Paul should think it needful to make strong assertions regarding his apostleship and his truthfulness. In short, he tells Timothy a great deal that he must often have told him before, and he tells it in rather a stern manner on the whole. Further, it is surprising that although the destination is Ephesus, a town the Apostle knew so well and where he had so many friends, there is not a single salutation or touch of local colour. It is also difficult to think that many of the instructions as to organisation could have been necessary in a Church that had been so long established, and that had originally enjoyed Paul's own personal superintendence for a series of years.

It must be confessed that there is much in such objections that is very hard to explain, and sufficiently justifiable of doubt. It is a question, however, whether it is strong enough to break the tradition, or to annul the support that the Epistle receives from its stronger companion. We are very ignorant of the precise circumstances, and of the needs of the moment, and *a priori* considerations as to the personal relations are therefore not to be relied on. One thing is certain, a sexagenarian, amid the deepening shadows, would very naturally speak of a companion as a "young man," even if he were 30 or 40 years of age; such a thing happens every day in the world. The absence, moreover, of any friendly allusions to the Ephesian Christians tells equally against a mere imitation of the Pauline manner; and any one who holds, with Holtzmann,[1] that the same writer had dared to

[1] *Pastoralbriefe*, p. 122. "In Wahrheit ist gerade hier Alles Copie."

concoct the closing chapters of 2 Timothy in order to give the Epistle an apostolic air, must find it hard to account for the fact that he makes no such venture, however modest, here. Nothing can be made of what Reuss calls the "police regulations" regarding the charity to widows in the fifth chapter, as indicating such a falling away from primitive goodness and unselfishness as could not yet have taken place. Paul had long since been under no delusion as to the mixed motives that showed themselves in the Church where he had warned many "night and day with tears." No relief is to be expected in the case of this Epistle from a theory of interpolation, for the tendency of adverse criticism seems to be to regard 1 Timothy as a compilation pure and simple. Thus Professor McGiffert says it may fairly be doubted whether there is any genuine element in it; and certainly his suggestion that the greeting may be a clipping preserved from a true Pauline,[1] is but a poor offering at the shrine of tradition, and one for which he is likely to escape the embarrassment of profuse gratitude. Dr. Moffatt, in his translation, does not print a single line in clarendon type, thereby indicating his opinion that not an atom rests on genuinely Pauline tradition, or that, if the compiler had any original sources at his command, he has used them so freely that they cannot now be made out.[2] Possibly the decisive element on the positive side is the apparent impossibility of separating First Timothy from Second. The man who wrote the one almost undoubtedly wrote the other. From the nature of the point at issue, it is a case where the stronger of the twin Epistles carries the other with it, rather than that the latter discredits the former.

On the whole our conclusion on this part of the subject would be that while there is much in the literary characteristics to warrant critical discussion, the grounds

[1] *Apos. Age*, p. 413.

[2] *Historical N.T.*, p. 703. Others do not go to this extreme. Some cannot resist the impression that 1 Tim. i. 12–17, ii. 1–6, vi. 9–12, are indubitably Pauline. Knoke recognises three documents in the Epistle, two of which he believes were letters of Paul to Timothy.

of objection are not strong enough to be decisive against the authenticity of the Epistles.

## (B) Historical Criticism.

### 1. *Paul's Personal History.*

The first historical objection is connected with Paul's personal history, and arises from the difficulty of finding a sure place for the Epistles in his life.

The problem with regard to 1 Timothy is to determine when it was that Paul on a journey to Macedonia ordered Timothy to abide in Ephesus; with regard to 2 Timothy, to reconcile the situation with the features of the imprisonment described in Acts and in the Captivity Epistles, particularly to determine when it was that Paul had been at Troas, that Erastus abode at Corinth, and that Trophimus was left sick at Miletus; and finally, with regard to Titus, to make out when Paul had visited Crete and left his disciple there, and when it was he purposed wintering at Nicopolis.

There are three general views: that everything is feigned and unhistorical; that room can be found for the events in the *lacunæ* of the Acts narrative; and lastly, that the references are, in the case of 1 Timothy and Titus, to a period of liberty after the captivity referred to in Acts, and, in the case of 2 Timothy, to a second and final captivity. The first is the view of Baur, Holtzmann, and the adherents of the Tübingen school generally; the second is in the main held by those who regard at least the personal passages as genuine Pauline fragments; while the third is usually, but not always, adopted by those who receive the Epistles as wholly authentic.

The remarkable thing is that on the modern interpolation hypothesis the personal historical passages, in spite of all their difficulties, are the very portions that are widely accepted as clearly genuine. This concession is now made by a whole stream of writers from Hausrath onwards,

many of whose names have been already mentioned. It has been described as "a return to sounder methods," and is unquestionably of the first importance in the criticism of the Epistles. It is felt that the wholesale concoction of the historical references is virtually inconceivable. No well-disposed disciple who had the slightest wish to have his composition accepted, would ever have ventured on such palpable flights of imagination. In the next place, if this concession be made, it relieves the Release-hypothesis, so far as it is connected with the Pastorals, of one of its greatest weaknesses, namely, that it frequently tended to argue in a circle; for it was apt to account for the history by a release, and then to buttress the release by appealing to the truth of the history. Moreover, if the personal portions are now to be accepted, the result is undoubtedly to strengthen the other parts, and to reduce the objections to them very much to a subjective basis. As long as it was otherwise, and the personal references were regarded as false, it was almost impossible to believe that any other part could be true.

The attempts to construct the history, whether before or after the Acts period, are on both sides equally conjectural. If, on the one hand, Lightfoot and his followers, believing in a release and a second captivity, venture on an outline that is quite hypothetical; on the other hand, the suggestions of Reuss, McGiffert, Macpherson, Bartlet, and others, who confine themselves to the gaps allowed by the records in Acts, are no less in the same region of hypothesis. One side need not fling the word "conjecture" at the other. Both are in the same condemnation, and the only question is, which is maintaining the more justifiable position.

Suppose that there be no real historical grounds for maintaining that Paul was released from his imprisonment, and that the very suggestion of his release is "absolutely gratuitous" (Reuss), shall we then find ourselves in a position, not free from difficulty indeed, but even reasonably preferable? We doubt it very much. No man has yet been able to fit in the personal references to the Acts

period with any great assurance. Reuss acknowledges that his own attempt is not really a success. Dr. McGiffert labours hard, but certainly not with any sense of triumphant conviction. Speaking generally, and simply recording the impression made on our own mind by such attempts, we should say that the Apostle's sojourn in Ephesus is broken up in a way that is not tenable; and, above all, that the Epistles have to be separated from one another by considerable intervals, and 1 Timothy thrust into a position among the great Epistles, which, if there be any value in internal evidence, is morally impossible. We acknowledge the dilemma, to which Sabatier, Godet, Weiss, Ramsay, and others, confess they are forced, either that Paul's career did not end where Acts leaves off, or that the Epistles are not authentic.

How, then, does it stand with regard to a release and a second imprisonment? It is absurd to say that the use made of this hypothesis is only an instance of "the ingenuity of exegetical despair"—more especially when the taunt comes from a quarter whose ingenuity in conjecture is colossal. The belief in a release was widespread in the early Church, ages before the question of authenticity was mooted. It is not a spirit conjured from the vasty deep, merely in the interest of agonising expositors. Existing independently, it seemed a natural key to the present problem. The proper question regarding it is whether it rests on solid historical grounds. It must be acknowledged that in this respect there is no certainty. Historical proof does not exist for either the one side or the other. The oft-quoted passage in Clement is a confused piece of rhetorical panegyric, and the corrupt lines in the Muratorian Fragment cannot be pressed as testimony. Neither does Eusebius profess to know, although he does not throw any doubt on the tradition he quotes. At the same time, it seems much more probable that, by the phrase "bounds of the West," Clement meant Spain rather than merely Rome itself where he was writing; and further, that a general and unchallenged early tradition is more likely to have some ground for its existence than to be absolutely base-

less. But with our present knowledge a verdict cannot be claimed on historical grounds, and at the best the issue depends on a balance of probabilities. Each student must decide for himself to which side the scales incline. The statement at the close of Acts leaves the question open, but our opinion is that had the two years ended in death, we should have heard of it there. The favourable rescript sent with the Apostle when he made his confident appeal to the Emperor, and the state of Roman law [1] at the time regarding such a case as his, also lend weight to the probability of release. It is quite evident, too, from Philippians and Philemon that, though Paul was prepared for either issue, he fully anticipated his freedom,—which he no longer did when he wrote the last chapter of 2 Timothy. Lastly, if these personal historical passages in the Pastorals are now allowed to be authentic, whether they belong to a few original letters or to many, it is legitimate to use them as evidence in support of a theory which fits them, and which is by no means otherwise unsupported; and it is really much more reasonable to do so than to fall back on problematical situations, to which no ingenuity seems able satisfactorily to adjust them. If, then, we accept the release, Lightfoot's conjectures (*Biblical Essays*) may be regarded as on the whole a highly probable sketch of the close of the Apostle's career.[2]

Professor Ramsay has the credit of adding a strong historical reason in favour of the early date of the Epistles. Nothing occurs in the Pastorals to indicate that persecution, though imminent, is organised and directed by Government; and Paul (2 Tim. ii. 9) declares that personally he is suffering "as a malefactor." This exactly harmonises with the attitude of Nero to the Christians, but not with that of

[1] *Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 245.

[2] Credner, Neander, Ewald, Bleek, Renan, Godet, Lightfoot, Ramsay, and most British writers accept the release. While Zahn (*Einleitung*, i. 443), Spitta (*Zur Gesch. und Litter. des Urchristentums*, i. 1), and Steinmetz (*Die zweite römische Gefangenschaft*), have recently in Germany written in its favour, Macpherson (*Amer. Journal of Theology*, iv., 1900), Moffatt (*Hist. N. T.*), Bacon (*Introduction*), and McGiffert (*Apos. Age*), have declared against it.

his successors. Under Nero the principle was that Christians were punished for "*definite crimes* connected with the Name." After Nero, and between 68 and 96, proof of crime was no longer required, but "acknowledgment of the Name alone sufficed for condemnation." With Nero Christians must be shown to be criminals; with Pliny and Trajan they were *ipso facto* outlaws and brigands. The whole tone of the Pastoral Epistles with regard to social life and persecution is "consistent only with an early date." "It is difficult," continues Ramsay, "for the historian of the Empire to admit that they were composed after that development of the Imperial policy towards the Christians which occurred under the Flavian Emperors."[1] His argument is carefully wrought out, and is of high importance. Should it come to be accepted it will practically enclose the Epistles within the Neronian period.

### 2. *Development of Doctrine.*

The second line of historical objection to the authenticity of the Epistles is connected with the history and development of doctrine.

In the hands of Baur and his immediate followers this was made the most decisive test. Yet it has been the department in which there has perhaps been the most palpable breakdown. Although it still has vogue, it has itself become, like its own description of the Paulinism of the Pastorals, 'faded' and 'attenuated.' Its history is largely characterised by concession and recession.

Two matters present themselves for consideration: (1) the false teaching referred to in the Epistles; and (2) the positive doctrine. It is argued that the former represents a development of error within the Church scarcely possible in Paul's time; and that the latter contains marks, if not radically different from Paulinism, at least of a departure from the form in which Paul himself would have stated Christian truth.

[1] *Church in the Roman Empire*, pp. 245, 248.

1. With regard to the false teaching, attention is fixed on two points; first, the description given of it, and secondly, the method of dealing with it.

The attempt to identify the errors with any known and determinate system of second century Gnosticism, is fairly abandoned. No one now professes to recognise Marcion and Valentinus in the Epistles. It is also generally agreed that but one type or party is referred to; any attempt to divide up the references and apply them variously, is not only unwarranted, but results in hopeless confusion. Again, the errorists are not outside but inside the Church, although their views are naturally tinged and affected by outside influences. They have fallen away from the profession of simpler and more wholesome opinions, and have become factious and mischievous. They were probably an inferior type of proselyte, led into the Church originally by motives of curiosity or self-interest. Hatch's description would suit them admirably: "half converted rhetoricians who brought into Christianity the practices and beliefs of degenerate philosophical schools." Their characteristics are only vaguely and generally outlined. They are Judaic, "of the circumcision," "desiring to be teachers of the Law," and also Gnostic, after a rudimentary fashion, not essentially far removed from the false teachers referred to in Colossians and Ephesians, although there are some additional features. They occupy themselves with vain and trivial logomachies, with myths and fables, and endless genealogies—doubtless a reference to the "rank growth of legend respecting the patriarchs and other heroes of early Mosaic history which had grown up among the Jews, both in Hebrew and in Greek, before the time of the Apostles."[1] They are also self-seeking and venal, given to easy propaganda among

[1] Hort, *Judaistic Christianity*, p. 136.

Absurd difficulty has been found over the word "antitheses," the oppositions of pseudo-Gnosis, because it accidentally coincides with what is believed to be the title of a book of Marcion's, a mere "seductive verbal coincidence." It may easily refer to casuistical methods of the Scribes, founding on endless distinctions, and setting one point against another (Hort); but it is sufficient to be content with the simple rendering "counter

silly women, and addicted to black arts very suitable to an Ephesian environment. They deny the resurrection except in a spiritual sense, forbid to marry, and make distinctions in foods, evidently founding their asceticism on a more pronounced dualistic basis than has been formerly met with. But, above all, their influence is highly immoral and corrupting, wrecking the peace of families and of the Church. It has been attempted to associate them with the Phrygian Ophites (Lipsius, Pfleiderer, and, very specially and clearly, Lightfoot). Others see in them the fountainhead of the Jewish Kabbala (Grotius, Baumgarten, Godet). But it is perhaps safer not to name any system, but simply to find sufficient warrant for their appearance in the well-known fact that Judaism was largely permeated by the spirit of Oriental thought and speculation at the beginning of the Christian era (Neander, Reuss, Schaff). At all events, the description of the errorists in the Pastorals gives no ground for seeking a date posterior to the Apostle. "Until it is proved," says Reuss, "that all charlatans, exorcists, astrologers, magi, and all others of the tribe, by whatsoever name they may go, Simon included, shot forth out of the earth all at once, like mushrooms, and not until after the year 150, this department of polemics is intelligible fully a hundred years earlier." [1]

But if negative critics have largely receded from extreme positions in this respect, it is still urged that the method of dealing with the errorists is not one that we can conceive Paul would have adopted. It is so forcibly feeble that to attribute it to him does a gross injustice to his intelligence (McGiffert). That is to say, he is first blamed for having no clear conception of his opponents, and then he is blamed for not confuting them in a masterly manner. The one fault might be recognised as carrying the other with it; and it is at least a curious and ingenious method

or opposing statements." The word 'gnosis' need not drag us into the second century; and the 'knowledge' is fairly described as not the true thing, but "falsely so-called," when its results are seen to be so miserable and vain; it is like the 'gnosis' of 1 Cor. xiii. which "puffeth up."

[1] *Hist. of the N. T.*, p. 125.

to try to reap advantage of both sides at once. But the truth is, the writer of the Epistles does not propose severely and systematically to define the dogmatic position of the errorists, nor does he mean to treat them in a rigorous and scientific fashion. We must judge him by his obvious intentions, and his self-selected standpoint. What he is thinking of almost exclusively are the ethical and practical effects. It is these that rouse his indignation and inspire his invectives; and if these things did not slip from our vision so easily we would not find so much fault with his denunciations.[1] The fruits are bad, and yet the roots from which they spring are merely contemptible. 'Sound doctrine' would be their best antidote, for sound doctrine leads away from childish things. And good morals would most successfully resist them, for a clear conscience is the very eye of the soul. Far from insulting the intelligence of the writer, we perceive in him a sounder wisdom than his critics allow. He chose his weapons skilfully for the purpose on hand. He does not antithetically formulate the true doctrine, simply because he has not first formulated the false. Take him on his own ground, and he acts sagaciously, not according to the schools, but according to common sense. It is not to disparage him if we cease to think of him as a doctrinaire, and prefer to regard him as a force in practical life. Suppose 1 Timothy is what it professes to be, it is surely sufficient for Paul to suggest to his friend to hold fast the sound doctrine. There is no need to enter into elaborate definitions. Timothy knew well the correct answer to the errorists. It was more needful to remind him of the correct behaviour. Attitude is often much more potent than argument, and it is perilous for a Christian leader to make false steps in conduct. The counsel stands for all who are in authority and from whom influence radiates. A very efficient safeguard against error, not perhaps error of the systematised and philosophic type

[1] Cf. Acts xiii. 10, where Paul almost fiercely denounces Elymas, also a Jew who had fallen away, and who was "the enemy of all righteousness, and a child of the devil." Cf. also Drummond, *Apostolic Teaching*, p. 166.

of a later age, but of the type now before us, is the blameless and holy life here commended. The method is therefore in admirable harmony with the situation. In a large document expressly meant for the public eye and consideration, a clear doctrinal statement of reasons and principles would have been most appropriate; but in Epistles of at least a semi-private nature, primarily written for the guidance of familiar and like-minded friends, nothing could be more natural than this: 'You know the truth of the matter, but let me remind you of the best way to treat these corrupt and contemptible characters, and of the proper precautions to take against them.' Though a scientific treatise be withheld, the frank outburst and the sane practical counsel may yet have served an excellent purpose.

2. The positive aspects of Christianity presented by the Epistles have further to be considered. It is strange that Epistles which are most acutely criticised for exhorting to "hold fast" the tradition, are at the same time denounced for letting the tradition go. Their preaching and their practice apparently differ. The author is not so sound and genuine a Paulinist as he thinks he is.

Here also, however, the voice of adverse criticism is, except in a few cases, not so confident as it once was. Many concessions are made, and if it be true that doubts of the authenticity of the Epistles still grow, they grow alongside increasing reverence for the lofty and apostolic nature of large portions of their contents. Reuss declares that no dogmatic differences from genuine Paulinism are really to be found in the Epistles;[1] Sabatier is of opinion that though the controversial arguments of Galatians and Romans have disappeared, yet "the doctrine that underlies these Epistles is expressed in all its energy and profundity";[2] and Pfleiderer, whose judgment on such a matter is of the highest value, while he recognises modifica-

[1] *Les Épîtres pauliniennes*, ii. 314.
[2] *Paul*, pp. 269–270.

tions, yet believes that we have here the "main traditional doctrines of Paulinism."[1]

At the same time we could scarcely imagine that the letters were Paul's, if there were not some things in them hard to understand. That at least remains as the perpetual sign-manual of the Apostle. It is difficult to say what was "beyond Paul," and the only thing that would much affect the question before us, would be to establish something of the nature of an absolute contradiction, or at least of such vital inconsistency that we could not conceive him capable of accomplishing it. We do not think that because he ascribes salvation to God the Father, or glances for a moment at the Law in its general moral aspect, he can therefore be convicted of departing from what has already been said or implied in Galatians or Romans. Nor if "faith" be linked with love (cf. Gal. v. 6), and even used frequently, though not always, in an objective sense as *fides quæ creditur* (cf. Rom. xii. 6 and vi. 17); nor if practical piety and godly living are inextricably associated with salvation, do we find any fundamental departure from the standard of the four great Epistles. We rather believe that all these things are in perfect harmony with the Pauline norm.

It is true that in Titus iii. 5 there is a reference to baptism that has no exact parallel in previous Pauline teaching: "God saved us by means of a bath of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Ghost." The language is difficult, and it is possible that the whole clause might be covered by the genitive which expresses the agency of the Holy Spirit. At any rate, although baptism as a condition of salvation appears as early as the Epistle of Barnabas and very frequently thereafter, it is not a Pauline conception.

[1] *Paulinism*, ii. 205.

Dr. Moffatt who, like Dr. McGiffert, reflects Beyschlag's general attitude to the Pastorals, says the three Epistles represent "the historical climax of Paulinism within the N.T. They are not Paul's but Pauline" (p. 561). It is very difficult, however, to harmonise this with a previous statement (p. 558), that the "characteristically Pauline interests are obliterated." If they are obliterated, what does the historical climax mean?

However highly the Apostle regards the ordinance, he never announces it as the indispensable medium of redemption. He is rather in the habit (like Peter in 1 Peter iii. 21) of referring to it in an ideal and mystical manner, as we see in Romans vi. 3–4, Galatians iii. 27, and Colossians ii. 12, applying it to the believer's union with Christ. Calvin says regarding this verse: "The Apostles are wont to deduce an argument from the sacraments to prove the reality sealed therein; since that beginning ought to convince pious minds that God does not mock us with empty figures, but by His own power inwardly accomplishes what He exhibits by an external sign." If it is so understood, there is no touch with later ecclesiastical errors. And in point of fact the whole context is permeated by the redemptive activity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in a way that is absolutely antagonistic to materialistic views.

It is also thought that the qualification desired in a bishop that he should be "the husband of one wife' (1 Tim. iii. 2), clearly reveals the spirit of the second century. So it would, if we attributed a second century meaning to the words. It was then thought to forbid a second marriage, so that one who was weak enough to wed a second time was unfit for the ministry. But Paul did not regard second marriages as in themselves improper (cf. 1 Cor. vii. 9 and 39); and if the other qualifications here required are simple matters of common morality, it is not to be inferred that he is thinking of anything different in this one particular; or that he intends, in so casual a fashion, to establish a new and peculiar principle, involving a higher standard of self-control and moral strength in one class of Christians than in others. Christianity demands essentially the same morality right through from minister to member. We have not the shadow of a doubt that the writer means to guard against impurity. It would have been strange indeed if he had warned against covetousness and insobriety, and had made no allusions to habits that were even more notorious in the Greek cities of Asia Minor, and that were not easily shaken off even at the

entrance door of the Christian Church.[1] It was his eager desire that all office-bearers, deacons and widows as well as bishops, should be above reproach in their social relations; not because they must obey a higher standard, but because they must be shining examples of a universal standard. The whole tone of the Epistles is utterly against esoteric distinctions. The writer no more believed in exclusive virtue than in exclusive knowledge. In this respect he saw infinitely more clearly into social matters than the men of the ages that succeeded him; and far from taking offence at his references, we ought rather, with Renan, to pay him some tribute for his uncommon good sense. If only the bishops of a later day had shared his views, Tertullian's taunt would not have been possible, that some were so brazen that they did not even blush when the Pastoral Epistles were read.[2]

Further, in perfect Pauline harmony is the view of God presented in the Epistles, and especially in its soteriological aspects. God is not only regarded as desiring the salvation of all men (1 Tim. ii. 4), who are all therefore implied to be in need of it, but His favour is from the beginning of the world, and is historically manifested by "the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ." Matters are also quite Pauline with regard to the Person of Christ. If His humanity is strongly emphasised in 1 Timothy ii. 4, His divinity and pre-existence are both clearly implied a

[1] If we translated literally, "a man of one woman," it might be more offensive to our ears, but it would certainly point our thoughts to the true meaning. In fact re-marriage is not even a tolerable inference from the words. If a man's wife dies and he marries again, it would be absurd, since death dissolves the union as Paul believed (Rom. vii. 1–3, and 1 Cor. vii. 8–9), to speak of him as a husband of two wives. The warning is devoid of meaning unless both women are living at the same time. The text is an admirable illustration of how easy it is to put the emphasis on the wrong words. Suppose we read that a bishop, to be without reproach, *must be the husband* of one wife, then marriage is compulsory, and a celibate not to be permitted.

An excellent discussion of the subject in its moral and historical bearings will be found in Appendix B, pp. 416–432, of Principal Patrick Fairbairn's *Pastoral Epistles* (1874).

[2] *De Monog.*, xii.

little later on (ch. iii. 16), in the phrase "God manifest in the flesh." Again, the very core of Paulinism is represented in the doctrine of salvation by grace, in Titus iii. 4 (where the idea of sonship, 'heirs,' is also present); and is expressed with admirable fervour not only there but also in 2 Tim. i. 9–10. We ought not to expect to find in every Epistle an exposition of "vicarious sacrifice," or reassertions of the mystic union with Christ by faith, and we can certainly readily understand the passing over of such fundamental doctrines in letters like these. It is absurd to demand from them a complete confession of faith or a rounded system of theology. The practical side of Christianity, the importance of its blameless and beneficent life, is the chief concern; and our conception of the Apostle would need to be completely recast if we considered that beyond his limits. A powerful emphasis on the moral and social value of good works, not as the merit which wins salvation, but as the fruit without which salvation as a continuous state is inconceivable, is assuredly no more foreign to Paul than it was to his Master. It is but the one side of the shield whose reverse is also shown in the Epistles, when they recognise the necessity of the response of the human will to the preached word, and of faith in Him who must be "believed on in the world."

Finally, too much has been made of the references to the "wholesome doctrine," and of Christianity as now appealing to tradition. It is possible that Paul's conception of doctrinal development and that of many of his critics, may radically differ. They may have ideas of progress of a kind which he would have earnestly repudiated. He verily believed in the "good deposit," something once for all revealed and received, the faith delivered to the saints. To his mind there was a "gospel," a message which could have no "development." The thought of some essential advance yet to be made in saving truth, was perfectly foreign to his mind. Far, therefore, from attributing his conservatism to a mere egotistic instinct, we ought to learn the lesson of its bearing on the Christian mission. The constant references to the "good

deposit" are evidence that the evangelical revelation is closed. Our belief in this would enable us to see eye to eye with the Apostle in a fundamental matter, and to recognise that the anxiety for the "tradition," which the Epistles so frequently display, is natural and inevitable from this standpoint. Nothing do we conceive to be more Pauline than the iteration which seems to some an irritation: "Hold fast the form of sound words." It is not due to the hardening of ecclesiasticism. It is Paulinism in one of its most characteristic and central convictions.

### 3. *The Ecclesiastical Situation.*

The third historical difficulty is connected with the ecclesiastical situation. It is argued that the official organisation points to a time considerably later than the lifetime of the Apostle. This is perhaps the most strongly pressed of all the critical objections, and certainly it is *primâ facie* the most formidable.

The views are twofold. In the first place, it is considered that official and hierarchical tendencies are so marked that we are inevitably carried beyond Pauline limits. On the other hand, it is contended that the development referred to is greatly exaggerated, and that the state of things is by no means incompatible with a late date in Paul's lifetime.[1]

It is clear that Christian Churches not only increased rapidly under the preaching of the gospel, but that they

[1] It is rather interesting to find Bishop Gore (*Church and Ministry*, ed. 1900, ch. v. p. 229 n.) pointing out that the upholders of both of these positions have 'motives' for their opinions regarding the ecclesiastical situation. For it is frequently felt that this is just the chief fault of discussions from the High Anglican standpoint, that they are continually haunted and hampered by the *arrière pensée*. Dr. Sanday makes a candid confession (*Expositor*, iii. v. 114), when he says in this connection: "We are too apt in England to let our thoughts run ahead of the argument, and to be speculating anxiously about the end before we have well got beyond the beginning. So the whole of our mental vision is troubled and disturbed; we do not look straight at the facts, but we are always casting our eyes askance at their imagined consequences." High Churchism of course accepts both the hierarchical teaching and the Pauline authorship.

began at once to regulate their own life. They can never at any time be said to have been without form and void. Jewish founders had many elementary methods immediately suggested to them by their past experience, and even converts familiar only with Gentile organisations would be ready enough with suggestions. References to actual facts, however, both within the larger and earlier part of the New Testament and for a considerable space beyond, are so few and so indefinite that it is a matter of the greatest difficulty to trace with any confidence the origin and development of the ecclesiastical constitution.

In the Gospels, Jesus gathers the Apostles round Him that they may be qualified to bear witness of Him, and to publish the gospel to all men. But there are no distinctions of rank, no rule for the transmission of office, no hint of any ecclesiastical organisation. The reason doubtless was that the Lord Himself promised to be perpetually present, so that His people could rely on spiritual guidance when occasion arose. After His ascension, the Apostles became the natural leaders of the disciples, and were revered in virtue of the evangelical trust committed to them, their high spiritual endowment, and their intimate knowledge of Jesus, although they by no means ruled with autocratic authority. Organisation appears to have come spontaneously, not after any uniform or essential pattern, but freely as seemed demanded by the growing conditions. Thus the first recorded step was the election of the Seven to relieve the ministry of the word by the ministry of tables. Following that, we find frequent mention of "elders" or "presbyters," although no indication is given of the occasion that brought them into existence. The obvious need of good order and discipline in the Christian communities, and the familiar model of the synagogue, are doubtless sufficient explanation. In the Epistle of James, the Christian assembly is even called a synagogue, and the elders are described as those entrusted with the care of the disciples. Among the presbyters of the Church in Jerusalem the place of honour and leadership was in time accorded to James the Lord's brother, probably on account

of this kinship, although the exact nature of his position is left quite in the vague. In the Church at Antioch, at a very early stage, there was a ministry of "prophets and teachers," who, under the direction of the Spirit, with fasting and prayer, "laid their hands" on Barnabas and Saul, and sent them out on the specific work to which the Spirit called them. These two missionaries themselves, on their first journey, "chose elders in each Church." The conference at Jerusalem which considered the question of circumcision was composed of "the apostles and elders," although the "brethren" and the "whole church" were associated with them in their decision. In his important address to the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, Paul describes them as "overseers" or "bishops" of the flock, and gives them earnest exhortations as to the watchful discharge of their trust in view of troublous times and distinctive errors which he foresees.

In the earliest of Paul's Epistles, the Thessalonians are called on to obey them that "have the rule over them"; and when the four great Epistles are reached, we find a very striking recognition of organisation, definite arrangements for teaching, for the care of the poor, for the regulation of worship and of the Lord's Supper, with manifold ministerial functions: first, of those chosen and endowed by the Spirit for the ministry of the Word, apostles, prophets, and teachers, who were not for any particular church but for all Christendom; and then, alongside these, a diversity of ministries or managements, helps and governments, defined in each individual case by the nature of the free gift bestowed by the Spirit. In 1 Cor. xi. and in Rom. xvi., we have the recognition of women in ministerial service; in Ephesians, "evangelists" along with apostles and prophets form a missionary ministry, and "pastors and teachers" a congregational or local one; while in the salutation of Philippians we have the first mention of bishops and deacons together. Nowhere, however, in these Epistles is it hinted that there is any ecclesiastical authority over the Church as a whole, or even over any group of Churches. Each Christian com-

munity is autonomous, and perfectly independent in the administration of its own affairs. Hebrews adds nothing to this, except that it effectively bars sacerdotalism. In 1 Peter, the Apostle exhorts the "elders of the Church" to be faithful as overseers or bishops, and describes himself as "also an elder." In John's letters to the Seven Churches, the reference to the "angels" is probably too symbolic to be greatly pressed. In his third general Epistle, at the close of the century and of the canon, he strongly condemns those who "love the pre-eminence."

During a quarter of a century, therefore, after Paul's first imprisonment, we are almost entirely destitute of information regarding the progress of organisation. And yet that must have been a very formative period in many ways, both under pressure from within and from without. A good deal of persecution was endured, and it is easy to conceive that local rulers of the Churches would have their hands more and more fully occupied with the temporal and spiritual affairs of the people, as the first and second generations of Christian teachers, especially apostles and prophets, began to disappear. With the closing years of the first century, however, and with the opening years of the second, the light shows once more, and we find ourselves face to face with results whose process we may conjecture but cannot clearly trace.

The evidence of the Didaché (Syria, *c.* A.D. 100) is slight but important; it exhorts (ch. xv.) the Christians to "elect therefore for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are meek, not lovers of money, and also true and approved"; but its chief importance is that it indicates that these settled local officials are now taking the place and fulfilling the duties of the itinerant prophets and teachers: "for unto you they also perform the service of the prophets and teachers": which clearly implies that the visits of the highly-gifted men of the earlier age were growing few and far between, and that their functions in public worship needed to be supplied. Clement of Rome, about the same period, writes from the Church of Rome to the Christians of Corinth concerning a factious revolt

among them against certain of their rulers. He mentions bishops and deacons, and presbyters as apparently synonymous with bishops, and traces their appointment to the Apostles; he also says that the Apostles gave injunctions regarding the succession to such offices (but not referring thereby to "apostolical succession"[1]), and that it is sinful to eject any one from the bishop's office who blamelessly fulfilled his duties. Clement is the first to apply the term "laity" to members who do not hold office.

But the most important testimony of all is that of Ignatius. His letters belong to the second decade of the new century, and, in view of threatening schism in Asia Minor, they are largely occupied with an enthusiasm for organisation. Bishop, presbyters, and deacons appear in three distinct and graded orders, the bishop being magnified as the representative of God, the central and sovereign authority round which the whole congregation should cling. The very urgency, however, with which he exhorts to this organisation seems to imply that it was not yet a mode everywhere existing; it did exist, but not so

[1] Dr. Moberly, in his *Ministerial Priesthood*, pp. 114–116, puts, we think, too much stress on Clement's statements. We must be careful to distinguish quite clearly between an orderly succession in the ministry and "apostolical succession" in the technical sense. Clement, moreover, speaks of the appointment of bishops and deacons "with the consent of the whole Church," and in another passage makes "the things ordained by the whole assembly of the people" the highest authority in the Church. The appointment of deacons he traces to the Apostles, just as he does that of bishops; and he does not at all indicate that he is thinking of the transmission of apostolic grace and authority, or that he means to affirm the principle that the right to exercise ministerial functions is derived solely from succession from the Apostles. It is a sin for the people to depose a regularly chosen bishop, if he has been without blame; which implies that there might be circumstances in which they could depose him, and that therefore his office does not rest securely and independently on apostolic descent. All through, Clement is striving to heal a breach of the peace in the Church of Corinth, and his whole drift is summed up in his own words, "There is order everywhere." That his theory, as Harnack says, "is devised to meet an emergency that had arisen, appears from the vague and general character of the statement, the reference to all Apostles, and the attempt which is not fully carried out, to give to the bishops the right of appointing their successors" (*Expositor*, iii. v. 332). Cf. also Gore, *Church and Ministry*, ch. vi. iv, Results (2), ed. 1900, pp. 290–291.

widely or so perfectly as he would like to see it. It is rather as yet the ideal than the real; as Professor Ramsay, following Sanday, puts it: "He is not a historian describing facts; he is a preacher, giving advice as to what ought to be." Ignatius also declares that he had not received this from men, but that it was to him a "special revelation of the Spirit." Though it would obviously greatly have strengthened his case, he significantly makes no appeal to the authority of the Apostles. He left that for another distinguished writer, Irenæus, an Oriental settled in the West, who wrote in the last quarter of the second century. Irenæus not only recognised the episcopal supremacy, but, in view of the fierce controversy with Gentile heretics, he formulated the doctrine of the apostolical succession, as the true bulwark of evangelical tradition. That is to say, Ignatius advocated the supremacy of the bishops, in order to conserve the unity of the Churches; Irenæus, their descent from the Apostles, in order to conserve the doctrine.[1]

The question is, what is the natural place of the Pastoral Epistles in this development, which is so complicated, and which down to a late date, is so vaguely defined? That they are much more detailed than previous Pauline references to organisation is evident, but do they indicate an advance such as could not have been reached in Paul's time?

Two objections are made *in limine*. Baur[2] thinks that nothing but Gnosticism can account for the well-defined episcopal constitution of the Church. But in the first place, Gnosticism, such as Baur meant, is not present in the Epistles; and in the second place, neither is the episcopal constitution. Baur was past-master in the art of

[1] Regarding the view that the Ignatian Letters have been freely interpolated in the interests of episcopacy, Lightfoot says: "If the writer of these letters had represented the Churches of Asia Minor as under presbyteral government, he would have contradicted all the evidence, which without one dissentient voice points to episcopacy as the established form of Church government in these districts from the close of the first century" (*Apostolic Fathers*, Ignatius and Polycarp, i. 422).

[2] *Paul*, ii. 102.

reading into an Epistle what he wanted to find. It is utterly impossible to represent the ecclesiastical standpoint of the Pastorals as equivalent to that of Ignatius, much less to that of Irenæus. The writer does feel impelled to lay stress on Church arrangements in face of adverse circumstances; but when we think of the trouble Paul already had at Ephesus, and of the greater trouble he foresaw, such impelling circumstances were certainly not absent in his case. We know that the state of the Asiatic Churches filled him with great anxiety, and it was most natural that, in writing to his associates and representatives, he should point out the way to meet the present and coming trials. Where false teaching tended to unsettle and demoralise, surely it was very obvious wisdom to lay down rules for good order and sound words.

Baur further remarks that it is a suspicious thing in itself to find Paul so much concerned with organisation, when he had never betrayed the slightest interest in it before. But from the very start of his missionary labours, the Apostle had recognised the importance of the official regulation of the young Christian communities; and his Epistles to the Romans, the Corinthians, the Ephesians, give abundant evidence that he had thought a good deal about the matter from the point of view of unity, good order, and edifying service.[1] The fact is, Baur's principle would not admit of any development in the Apostle's ministry; it would equally close the door on Colossians because it develops the doctrine of the Person of Christ, and on Ephesians because it advances that of the Church. We must bear in mind that the Pastorals do not consider organisation philosophically or *in abstracto;* they treat of it in direct relation to concrete and particular needs; even distinguishing (*e.g.*, in the matter of the deacons, the widows, and the establishing of elders by Titus) between an old community like Ephesus and a new one like Crete. Moreover, it is a mistake to say that "the official and

[1] For a detailed examination of passages, cf. Kühl's *Gemeindeordnung in den Pastoralbriefen*, pp. 144–147. Cf. also Beet, *Ephesians*, pp. 392–393.

ecclesiastical spirit dominates the three Epistles" (Moffatt). It certainly does not dominate 2 Timothy. Nor does it occupy the other two at any inordinate length. The perspective is lost, if we fail to keep first things first. The paramount aim of 1 Timothy and Titus is not to advance Church orders, but to conserve Christian life and truth. That is the end towards which the wisely suggested means is a firmer consolidation of those who minister.

(*Consideration of particular objections.*)

In addition to the two objections which have just been considered, many others are made on matters of detail. It is necessary to take account of those that are most frequently urged.

1. It is thought that public worship is represented as too developed for Paul's time. Prayers are to be made for all men, for kings, and for all who are in authority; but surely it is drawing too fine a distinction to exclude this from Pauline possibility after a large-hearted and evangelical ministry of thirty years. And even if we have some traces of a hymn in 1 Timothy iii. 16, and forms of expression here and there that indicate a rule of faith in course of development, we cannot but feel that such things were eminently natural with men who were continually conducting public worship and handling divine truth, and that it was most natural of all to repeat them in letters, especially in the case of a master putting an assistant "in remembrance." Again, it is clearly a mistake to think that the public reading of the Old Testament (1 Tim. iv. 13) is evidence of a later date. On the face of it, such reading, wherever copies of the Scriptures were available, would certainly be one of the earliest of Christian customs. From the first the Apostles based their exhortations on the Hebrew revelation, and Paul's own frequent references to the Old Testament would be unintelligible, if it were not implied that the readers of his Epistles were more or less familiar with such Scriptures.

2. The enrolment of aged widows (1 Tim. v. 9) is

regarded as a further objection. Baur thought this a very decisive proof of late origin. He said it could only be explained by the ecclesiastical vocabulary of the second century, and insisted on translating the first clause of ver. 14 in a way that suited his theory: "Decline young women as 'widows'"[1] But it is a question of interpretation in the first place, and thereafter of opinion as to the stage of development. The Apostle says: "Let none be enrolled as a widow who is less than sixty years of age," and except she be irreproachable in character, and distinguished for good and beneficent works. What was the purpose of this enrolment? One's first natural impression is that it is to assist the regulation of the almsgiving. This is the matter with which the context deals, and care, even extending to age and character, was not out of place in adjusting the poor-roll, if for no other reason than that enrolment would tend to be permanent. As for younger widows, they might soon cease to be proper objects of the Church's bounty. On the other hand, it may be strongly urged that the registration was for the purpose of ecclesiastical service, inasmuch as the qualities now referred to are not primarily those entitling to charity, but rather point to fitness for Church work; and that consequently we have here something of the nature of that "order of widows" of which Ignatius and especially Tertullian speak, but which did not long survive the establishment of the monastic system. It might be a matter of opinion whether the age were not too high, and in point of fact so sweeping a restriction was not observed in second century practice. But suppose this interpretation accepted, why must we conclude that it represents something that Paul could not have promulgated? In the Epistles to the Corinthians, the Romans, and the Philippians, the Apostle recognises the Christian service of women, and it is easy to understand how he might approve of some of the more experienced and devoted pensioners of a congregation being

[1] *Paul*, ii. 103 n. He takes 'young women' as subject, and 'widows' as predicate; "a quite untenable expedient," says Holtzmann.

enlisted as a corps of valuable assistants (cf. also Titus ii. 3). There need be no difficulty in admitting apostolic reference to so simple and reasonable an organisation, and even to seeing in it the germ of the later temporary institution.[1]

In connection with the position of women in the Church there is a much clearer hint as to date in 1 Tim. ii. 12, where it is said: "I suffer not a woman to teach." This embargo is not only characteristically Pauline (cf. 1 Cor. xiv. 34), it points to the early period when speech in the Church was free (men are still free in ver. 8), and when such a restriction would therefore have real significance.

3. The Pastorals are regarded as "tendency" writings composed in the interests of the episcopal constitution. Two points have to be considered: (1) what is said of presbyters and bishops, and (2) the position assigned to Timothy and Titus.

(1) Episcopacy has for its elements the three graded orders, bishop, presbyters, deacons, the bishop being supreme. It is fully brought before us in the Epistles of Ignatius, and thence onwards it is the accepted type of government, though it did not everywhere advance with uniform steps. Do the Pastorals so represent matters that it is legitimate to conclude that they seek to give apostolic authority for such a constitution? The distance is great, says Réville, between the bishop of the Pastorals and the bishop of Ignatius.[2] The question is, how great? He does not think it huge, because he believes in an original and essential distinction between the functions of the presbyter and of the bishop. This is the central matter. Nearly all schools of opinion are agreed that there was an

[1] The word 'widows' in 1 Timothy is used quite in a natural sense, and it is perfectly gratuitous to force upon it the later technical meaning, as, *e.g.*, in Ignatius, *To the Smyrnæans*, sect. 13 ("virgins who are also called widows"). Bertrand (*Essai Critique*, p. 152) points out the parallel case in Galatians of the name "catechumen," one who receives instruction, gradually becoming technical in later times. But who, as Godet says, would derive from that an argument against the authenticity of Galatians?

[2] *Les Origines de l'Épiscopat*, p. 304.

early time in the development of the organisation of the Church when presbyter and bishop were synonymous terms. They are so in Acts, and, though the name 'presbyter' does not occur in Paulines previous to the Pastorals, one of the most marked instances of the application of the title 'bishops' to the presbyters occurs in the Apostle's speech to the Ephesian elders at Miletus. It can scarcely be doubted that the Pastorals link themselves to this usage. The passages 1 Tim. iii. 1–7 and Titus i. 5 and 9, are incapable of any other explanation, and Lightfoot's Excursus on the question in his *Philippians* (pp. 95–99) may be accepted as final. Scholars so opposed in their views on the Pastorals as Holtzmann and Pfleiderer on the one hand, and Moberly and Gore on the other, quite agree on this point.[1]

The Pastorals, then, on this test are sharply separated from the differentiation of the offices that appeared in the second century. As exhibiting the identification of bishop and presbyter they might be considerably later than Paul, but they could not be so late as Ignatius. A few sentences from an Ignatian Epistle, also addressed to Asiatic Christians, will show how different is the atmosphere. "Do ye all follow your bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and the presbytery as the Apostles; and to

[1] If we make the notable exceptions of Hatch, Harnack, Weizsäcker, and Réville, to whom may be added Bernard, and Allen, we may say that it is almost universally believed that bishop and presbyter were not originally and fundamentally distinct. Hatch traced the presbyter to a Jewish, and the bishop to a Gentile, origin. Harnack followed and supplemented. Sanday's lucid articles in the *Expositor*, iii. v, must not be passed over. He will command a very wide assent to his view that ἐπίσκοπος as well as πρεσβύτερος owes its origin to Old Testament influences. It is also undoubtedly a correct view that the word 'bishop' or 'overseer' was originally introduced to describe the function of superintendence which the presbyter exercised. Says Loofs, "ἐπίσκοπος ist eine Funktionsbezeichnung." See Sanday's *Conception of Priesthood*, pp. 61–62. Kühl also says of the presbyters: "sie waren von Anfang an πρεσβύτεροι ἐπισκοποῦντες" (*Gemeindeordnung*, p. 130). Vincent's Excursus in the Inter. Crit. Comm. on *Philippians*, pp. 36–51, is an interesting discussion of the whole question, valuable for its references to recent opinion; he concludes adversely to the identity. Lindsay (*Church and Ministry*, pp. 157 sqq., and App.) maintains the identity, and gives an admirable review of the history of the controversy.

the deacons pay respect, as to God's commandment. Let no man do aught of things pertaining to the Church apart from the bishop. Let that be held a valid eucharist which is under the bishop or one to whom he shall have committed it. Wheresoever the bishops shall appear, there let the people be; even as where Jesus may be, there is the universal Church. It is not lawful apart from the bishop either to baptize or to hold a love-feast; but whatsoever he shall approve, this is well-pleasing also to God; that everything which ye do may be sure and valid" (*To the Smyrnæans*, sect. 8). Again: "Let all men respect the deacons as Jesus Christ, even as they should respect the bishop as being a type of the Father, and the presbyters as the council of God and as the college of the Apostles. Apart from these there is not even the name of a church" (*To the Trallians*, sect. 3).[1] In the Pastorals there is nothing at all to compare with this insistence on ecclesiastical authority, divine analogy, and sacramental validity. Things are far more primitive, and the official qualifications are not only mainly moral, but almost identical for both bishops and deacons. It may further be added that the counsel (1 Tim. iii. 6) not to appoint a neophyte or new convert, which is not appropriate to a newly founded congregation, fits well the older Church of Ephesus, and is not repeated in the case of Crete.

(2) But it is said that the positions assigned to Timothy and Titus clearly show the differentiation we speak of. These "delegates" are palpable delineations of the bishop in the later sense. They are "personifications of the bishop," says Holtzmann; they are probably "forerunners of the later monarchical bishops," adds Beyschlag; while Pfleiderer thinks that the pre-eminent duties assigned to Timothy represent an attempt "to establish the primacy of the bishops against the presbyters."[2] Others have detected in Timothy and Titus the prototypes of the archbishop and the metropolitan. But why should "enigmas"

[1] The translations are Lightfoot's: *Apostolic Fathers*, II. ii. 569 and 555.
[2] *Pastoralbriefe*, p. 224; *N.T. Theology*, ii. 515; *Paulinism*, ii. 205.

be found in so obvious a matter? Why ask so mysteriously, "Who are meant by these apostolic legates?" and why print the names "Timothy" and "Titus" in inverted commas? This is to beg the question, and to create the enigma. It is surely possible to take the Epistles in their plain sense. Why should it be a thing incredible that Paul entrusted his friends with missions such as these? He had at other times sent them to represent him in difficult and delicate tasks, and the nature of the duty has now changed simply because the circumstances have changed. Because there are here some points of analogy with later conceptions, with regard to teaching and administration and discipline, it is by no means imperative to conclude that everything is written in the interest of these conceptions.

Moreover, the second century writer who intends this picture of Timothy to be a valuable delineation of what a bishop ought to be, must be regarded as a very blundering artist. He could scarcely have accomplished his task in a more ineffective manner. Timothy, a type of the dignified and autocratic vicar of God! He would probably have been glad to escape from his mission. It is more than hinted that he was lacking in courage; he is threatened with decline of his gift, which needs to be "stirred up"; and he is generally counselled and admonished in a manner no *falsarius*, with episcopal ideas to uphold, would ever have ventured to employ. He is not even once called a 'bishop' or 'archbishop,' which would at least have been easy. He is called an 'evangelist,' however, and though he is temporarily setting a congregation in order, and acting on firm instructions whose authority the Ephesians will be little likely to dispute, his own proper work is the preaching of the Word, and this he will resume when the present service is over, or when the Apostle calls him to another.

It is allowed that 2 Timothy is exempt from all such difficulties, because there is no trace there of the notion of ecclesiastical office: "his whole work," says Pfleiderer, "is made to depend, not on his position, but on his personal

worthiness." But if so, is the presumption not strong that the characterisation is not really intended to be different in the companion Epistle? Lastly, of Timothy as a metropolitan prototype, Réville justly says: "It is really useless to discuss suppositions that attribute to the Churches of the first century institutions that did not appear until the fourth."[1] Sanday also, in studying the origins of episcopacy, deprecates controversies "on lines which seem to lead nowhere"; and adds: "Among these irrelevant and inconclusive arguments I should include that which sees in Timothy and Titus the direct and lineal ancestor of our modern bishops."[2]

4. There are two matters in the Epistle that are supposed to be inconsistent with Paul's conception of the free gifts of the Spirit as qualifying for service. These are: (1) the appointment of elders as teachers, and (2) the connecting of Timothy's spiritual gift with the "laying on of hands."

(1) In both 1 Timothy and Titus, elders are to take up teaching; but in early Paulines (1 Thessalonians, Galatians, and especially 1 Corinthians) this duty is represented as distinctly charismatic, wholly dependent on spiritual endowment. It now seems that the free gift is "subordinated to the regular office" (Beyschlag, ii. 514).

But it is to be observed that we are yet at a period when the free gift is quite strongly in evidence. In the case of women its exercise is curtailed; in the case of men it is commended; and at the same time the false teachers were notable instances of its abuse. In the nature of things this very liberty was certain to be one that would soon show the defects of its quality. Nothing is more likely than that the Apostle would frequently have to consider what means might best be devised to prevent the licence that would turn Christian assemblies into a species of theological bear-garden. We must remember that we are not at the beginning but at the end of a long experience,

[1] *Les Origines de l'Épiscopat*, p. 284.
[2] *Expositor*, iii. v. 112.

and that the tightening of the grasp is largely due to the logic of events. Besides, there is evidence that the charismatic power gradually faded, and we may even trace something of its decline in Paul's Epistles. In Colossians and Philippians we have no mention of "gifts" at all; while, particularly affecting the matter in hand, in Ephesians the class of local ministers is described by the double designation of "pastors and teachers." We cannot, therefore, conclude that the policy now indicated was necessarily beyond Pauline limits.

(2) In 2 Timothy i. 6, Paul counsels Timothy regarding "the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands"; and in 1 Timothy iv. 14, he says: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." "Paul," says Beyschlag, "would never have written anything like that; to him the charism was an effect of the free Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 11), not of the laying on of human hands." [1]

In the first place, let us say, the two references are probably to the same act, when the Apostle took part with the (Lycaonian) elders in the consecration of his friend. In 2 Timothy it was natural for Paul to speak only of himself, for, as Hort remarks, the personal relation at the moment was everything.[2] Again, the meaning of the phrase, "given thee by prophecy," is elucidated by the expression in 1 Timothy i. 18, where it is intimated that Timothy's suitability for the work entrusted to him, as evangelist and companion of the Apostle, was first indicated by prophetic voices.

What are we, then, to understand as the exact significance of the imposition of hands? In the Christian Church this was undoubtedly a Jewish inheritance, and was a solemn and expressive symbol that a child of God was henceforth specially received or specially set apart for

[1] Cf. also Réville, *Les Origines*, p. 279, **n. 1.** "Le cours du Saint-Esprit est déjà canalisé."

[2] *Christian Ecclesia*, **p. 187.** Cf. also Kühl, *Gemeindeordnung*, p. 58.

particular service. It was used "not only in admission to office, but also in the admission of an ordinary member, and in the readmission of a penitent." The New Testament, however, makes so little of it that it cannot possibly have been considered absolutely indispensable. Even in later times it has been shown that it was not universal, and, as Hatch pertinently argues, if it was not universal, it is impossible that it can have been regarded as essential. In his own case Paul would never have allowed that he was destitute of missionary qualifications apart from the action of the prophets and teachers at Antioch (Acts xiii.). Indeed, the Book of Acts does not represent the imposition of hands as the necessary channel of spiritual gifts, but rather as the solemn recognition and confirmation of their presence. Thus when the Seven are introduced to office by prayer accompanied by the laying on of hands, they are characterised as men already full of the Holy Spirit.

The question then is: Do the two passages in the Pastorals convey anything more than this? Do they signify that the gift would never have been imparted to Timothy but for the imposition of hands? If they do, then these passages at least are beyond Pauline limits, and indeed are fundamentally foreign to his conceptions and his age. But we are not convinced that such stress is meant to be put on the action. In the first place, the statements themselves vary: if in the one case the preposition means strictly "by," in the other it only means "along with" or "accompanied by." Besides, a great deal else in the Epistles is quite out of harmony with the idea that the laying on of hands was indispensable to the gift. For if this be the true significance, it is hard to understand why there is no mention of the act in the letter to Titus, where there are occasions when it would have been most natural to refer to it. Further, if this be the conception in the author's mind, then the rite is one of such paramount importance that we should certainly expect, since it has never before been made clear, that the assembly of elders would be carefully instructed not to omit it; but any such instructions are conspicuously absent. Moreover, it should be kept in

mind that the word "gift" (χάρισμα), as Hatch points out, had a very wide meaning: "to be a Christian was itself a gift; to be orthodox was a gift; and in the same way, to hold office in the Church was a gift."[1] Timothy's laying on of hands (1 Tim. v. 22) probably refers to the act of blessing by which penitents were received back into communion.[2] Finally, the reference to "prophecy" in the immediate context, and the repeated use of the word χάρισμα without any sense of incongruity, are clear indications that we have not yet reached the period of rigidly ecclesiastical, or what are called catholic, conceptions. What Timothy is represented as receiving is no succession to apostolic authority and exclusive privilege, but simply a gift or spiritual capacity which enabled him to fulfil the work of an evangelist, and which needed to be revived and so used that he would not be despised.

5. There remain two closely related objections, connected with the conservation of Christian doctrine: (1) the prominence given to apostolic tradition, and (2) the idea of a church as a mainstay of the truth.

(1) Timothy (2 Tim. i. 13, ii. 2, iii. 14; cf. also Titus i. 9) is exhorted earnestly and repeatedly to hold fast the form of sound words, the things he has learned and been assured of, and also to commit them to faithful men who must be able to teach and defend them. But this kind of conservative anxiety has been a mark of the Apostle all through. There is scarcely one of his Epistles from which it is absent. The Thessalonians (2 Thess. ii. 15) are exhorted to hold fast the tradition which he has taught them by word or Epistle; the Galatians (i. 6–9) are warned against any other gospel than that which he has preached to them; the Romans (xvi. 17) must avoid those who act contrary to the doctrine which they have learnt; and the Corinthians (1 Cor. xvi. 1–11) must stand in the

[1] *Organisation of the Early Christian Churches*, p. 136 n.

[2] So Pfleiderer, *Paulinism*, ii. 205; Ellicott, *Pastoral Epistles*, *in loc.*; and Hort, *Christian Ecclesia*, pp. 214–215. But the application to office is the traditional view, and though it may not suit the context so well, it does not contradict it.

gospel which he delivered and they received. This gospel was even a trust to himself; he also had "received" it, and it was his boast that he kept it to the end. The present anxiety, therefore, is quite in harmony with life-long conceptions, and it is only naturally accentuated by the presence of disturbing influences, doctrines that are unsound and corrupting. "We must never weary of repeating," says Sabatier, "because it is continually forgotten, that Paul was an Apostle before he was a theologian. To him the need of conservation was more urgent than that of innovation. . . . The greatest misfortune which can befall those who have received his message is to betray the trust."[1]

(2) In 1 Tim. iii. 14–15, we have a passage which has been much misunderstood because it has been so often mistranslated. The definite article is not present, and the translation should be: "that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in a household of God, which is a church of a living God, a pillar and stay of the truth."

"There are few passages of the New Testament," says Hort, "in which the reckless disregard of the presence or absence of the article has made wilder havoc of the sense."[2] The writer is speaking not of the Church in a universal sense, but of a church in a local or congregational sense, and his meaning simply is that every Christian community, by its well-ordered life in the Household of which God is the Master, is a strength and support to the truth: that is, it takes a share in commending it and upholding it before the world. In 2 Tim. ii. 19, again, the Christian community is similarly described as the firm foundation of God. Beyschlag finds a difficulty, because, he says, this community is immediately described as a mixed body of good and evil members, in a way in which Paul would not have described it, and which at once undermines the security that has been asserted. This is because the critic misinterprets what is said. It is not said that the society

[1] *Paul*, p. 270. [2] *Christian Ecclesia*, p. 174.

is mixed of good and evil; it is simply said that in a great house some vessels are of gold and some of iron; some for honour, and some for dishonour — quite a different thing: all may be clean and pure, all meet for the Master's use, and that is what the Apostle never ceased to desire.

Again, it is a question of interpretation when Dr. Moffatt says that "Institutions are coming to be more than ever [why "more than ever"?] the condition of orthodoxy," and gives as authority for so important a deduction, 2 Tim. ii. 15: "Make every effort to present thyself genuine to God, a worker with no cause for shame, handling the truth aright."[1] A reader would have to con this verse very studiously before the thought of "institutions as a condition of orthodoxy" would dawn upon him. Dr. Moffatt also believes that "a guarantee for the soundness of the dogmatic principle is being shifted from the individual faith and consciousness to officialism"; and his reference is to Titus i. 9, where a qualification of a bishop is said to be "holding the sure word which is in accordance with the doctrine, so that he may be able to give exhortation in the sound doctrine and also to refute objectors." If this points to a guarantee in officialism, it is at the most rudimentary stage conceivable, and a stage simply inseparable from the very appointment of a Christian teacher. It has very little in common with the later ecclesiastical dogma which Dr. Moffatt evidently means to suggest. It is a simple description of an important function which a certain office-bearer will naturally be expected to fulfil, if there is to be any meaning in his office at all. But if we say it is important that a minister should hold the gospel and be able to preach the gospel, we do not necessarily imply that the soundness of his teaching is guaranteed by the mere fact of his holding office. Large conclusions are easy, but the premisses must first be able to bear them.

We do not, therefore, believe that a fair and natural interpretation of the text leads us to a stage of ecclesiastical

[1] *Historical N.T.*, p. 563.

development so pronounced as is frequently asserted. The organisation will not bear comparison with that of the Ignatian period: it is not strong enough to flourish in that air. On the other hand, though the Epistles enter into a few details as to qualifications and functions—not as to ranks and dignities—they are not essentially one iota in advance of the simple statement of Philippians that there were "bishops and deacons" in the Church of Philippi. And the instructions are not only elementary, they fit most naturally the assumed situation, namely, that the Apostle, near the end of his career, perceiving many clouds hanging over his beloved Churches, writes these things for the guidance of the younger generation who must soon take the work from his failing hands.

Finally, and with regard to the whole discussion, it would be futile to pretend that there is nothing in the Pastorals to give occasion for doubt. Many scholars of the highest repute have decided adversely to their authenticity, and the minds of others are still in a delicate state of balance. A review of the evidence, we believe, should lead to the conviction, in the first place, that there is no adequate reason for denying the authenticity of 2 Timothy; and, in the second place, that the affinities between that Epistle and the other two are so strong that their detachment is scarcely possible. The most reasonable objections are almost entirely connected with 1 Timothy and Titus, and yet there is perhaps not one of these objections incapable of mitigation or explanation, even if complete solution, in our present imperfect knowledge of the period, cannot be claimed. But until the attack has overthrown 2 Timothy, it will never be able to secure a decided verdict against the Pastorals as a whole. Far from having yet succeeded in this object, it has, in our opinion, conspicuously failed. In fact the tendency is rather to establish this Epistle, and to find it "so close to the Pauline tradition" that to separate it from the Apostle is rather a matter of critical finesse than warranted on any rational grounds.

## III.

## PSEUDONYMITY AND INTERPOLATION.

It ought not to be imagined that merely to find the Epistles unauthentic is to solve the historical and dogmatic problem. It rather raises it in a still more acute form. Baur made the attempt to fix the Epistles in a post-apostolic environment, and where he failed no one else has succeeded.[1] If the Pastoral Epistles will not suit the apostolic age, we want to know what age they exactly will suit, and what can have been the motive of their composition. It has not been even plausibly shown that their doctrinal and ecclesiastical phenomena fit any period more naturally than the apostolic, or that any reason for their existence is to be preferred to the simple one that they bear on their face.

Moreover, if Paul did not write them, the supposition of an "ardent disciple," whether in the next generation or at the beginning of the second century, will not surmount the difficulties. This enthusiastic disciple, who considered himself a "genuine Paulinist," at once so skilful and so obtuse, following so closely yet differing so daringly, inventing impossible personal situations with the utmost *sang-froid* while he yet breathes an air of the profoundest reverence for truth, conspicuously able and fruitful in an age of conspicuous feebleness and barrenness, pretending to honour his master, conjuring with his name, in the very act of flying in the face of his most solemn warnings and attenuating his most cherished doctrines—is an absolute chimæra. It will certainly have to be explained, why, if in 2 Timothy he shows himself admirably capable of catching Paul's manner, and especially of devising long personal passages full of touches only designed to secure deceptive effects, he yet leaves 1 Timothy entirely destitute

[1] *E.g.*, the account of the purpose and genesis of the Epistles given by Prof. McGiffert, *Apostolic Age*, pp. 412–413, seems to us very unconvincing.

of such imitative marks; for their concoction was so easy to him, and he had, by hypothesis, such astute appreciation of their utility. It is of course true that to prove the Epistles do not belong to a certain writer, is to take only a first step in the process of criticism, and quite a legitimate one, if it can be accomplished. But it must be pointed out that criticism cannot rest there. No advance has really been made, as long as we are left in dubiety and darkness still more profound than before.

If the Epistles are entirely spurious, then they are not merely anonymous but pseudonymous compositions. They profess to be Paul's, and they personate him most elaborately. This raises several interesting questions. Can they have been produced in good faith? Would the Christian contemporaries of the writer, understanding his writings to be purely fictitious, yet receive them with honour? Is it possible still to retain them in the canon?

Pseudonymous writings were certainly very prolific in the early Christian eras, and predominated to such an extent over genuine compositions that Jülicher declares it would be wonderful if none of them were found in the canon, and passing strange if so large a collection of letters as that of the New Testament could escape the spurious element. This, however, is an *a priori* opinion on a matter that can only be decided by evidence as to fact. The questions that primarily concern us are, whether it was a general feature of those early pseudonymous writings that they were composed in perfect honesty, and what were the views seriously taken of them by Christian authorities.[1]

It is frequently asserted that the *bona fides* of the supposed pseudonymous author of the Pastorals is quite possible, because such a device as his was in harmony with

[1] On Pseudonymity cf. Jülicher, *Einleitung*, pp. 38–40; Reuss, *Hist. of N.T. Writings*, sect. 247 sqq.; Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, pp. 12–16; Moffatt's carefully written section in his Appendix, *Histor. N.T.*, pp. 619–624; and Prof. Candlish's two important articles on "The Moral Character of Pseudonymous Books," *Expositor*, iv. **iv.** 1891.

the moral and literary standards of his time. This dictum, however, has never been made the subject of detailed proof. Neander condemned it, if put forth without modification, as a "purely arbitrary assumption." Professor Candlish, after a careful survey of the external evidence, writes: "It would seem that so far from innocent and recognised fictions in composition being more common in ancient than in modern literature, the very opposite is nearer the truth; for of ancient pseudonymous books a far larger proportion was meant to be received as genuine than of modern; and indeed it seems doubtful whether any but a very few were written in perfect good faith." Again: "It would seem that in the early Christian centuries, when any work was given out as of ancient or venerable authorship, it was either received as genuine, which was done with very great facility of belief, or regarded as an imposture; that such fictions, though very common, were regarded, at least by the stricter Christian teachers, as morally blameworthy; and that the notion of dramatic personation as a legitimate literary device is never mentioned, and seems never to have been thought of as a defence of such compositions."[1] Dr. Sanday also, speaking of the Jewish view, reminds us that "the ancients were not themselves so indifferent to the moral character of literary impersonation as is sometimes supposed."[2] We may readily infer that the early Christian standpoint was not likely to be lower, although it is true that by the fourth century the Church did become largely saturated with the vicious principle that wrong is permissible for a good end. In very early times indeed, and above all in Pauline circles, it is scarcely credible that the Christian exaltation of truthfulness was universally ignored. Paul earnestly warned the Thessalonians (2 Thess. ii. 3) that spurious words and letters "as from him" were to be looked for, and his warning shows us what he at least would have thought of the disciple who made such an abuse of his name as is here implied.

Tertullian (*De Baptismo*, xvii.) tells us that the

[1] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 97 and 103. [2] *Inspiration*, p. 224.

presbyter who confessed that he had composed the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* "from love of Paul," was summarily dismissed from his office. At the same time, Weiss and others are perhaps slightly mistaken in regarding this as clear evidence of how carefully the Church "guarded against the admixture of anything spurious." The discipline may possibly have been exercised rather on account of heretical and unpalatable doctrine (*i.e.* regarding the right of a woman to preach and baptize) than on account of literary fabrication as such. Very numerous warnings against Pseudepigrapha soon occur in Christian writings, but their insistence is chiefly because of destructive tendencies in the teaching. Thus the Muratorian Fragment speaks of the exclusion of certain spurious Paulines, but why? Because "fel cum melle non congruit." Origen says that Celsus charged the Christians with interpolating the Sibylline Books, which clearly shows the handle that could be made of such a practice at the close of the second century. At the same time, we must recognise that the view of pseudonymity and that of interpolation might be very different.

Bishop Gore expresses the matter very clearly when he says that the element of fraud and forgery rightly comes in, if a writer has employed "methods other than those sanctioned by the literary conscience of the time."[1] He further lays down the principle, that the evidence of forgeries properly so called "would lie in the fact that the author could not have afforded to disclose the method and circumstances of their production." The principle is sound, and very applicable to the present case, if only we clearly understand what is meant by the phrase "could not have afforded." Would it or would it not—not among pagan philosophers, but among the Christian leaders of the sub-apostolic age—have been fatal to the influence and authority of these writings, if the fact had been well known that they were entirely fictitious?

It is impossible to give a dogmatic answer to this

[1] *Lux Mundi*, 10th ed., p. xxx and n.

question. But if we may rely on the results of Dr. Candlish's induction, which we have just quoted, the strong presumption is that if the non-genuineness of the writings had been recognised, we should have found them somewhere condemned, or at least have had some indication that their true character was well understood. Even if it be true that doctrine would be much more thought of than literary form, it is most unlikely that the elaborate personation of the Apostle, with its purely imaginary situations, would have been universally accepted without reference or demur, especially by those who stood so comparatively near the actual history. What alone would account for such a completely favourable reception would be that the writings were really accepted as genuine, which is contrary to the hypothesis.

If, however, the Epistles were universally accepted as genuine, that would mean that the age which produced so consummate a literary artist, produced no one capable even of suspecting him. That might be, but it is not very probable. Our opinion rather is that if the Epistles were taken for genuine, it was because the author meant them to have such a reception, and was at great pains to secure it. That is to say, he not only deceived his generation, but he intended to deceive. His productions stand absolutely unparalleled in their age, both for the careful restraint and for the minute and manifold adroitness of their imitative skill. It is this very subtlety which is to us decisive of their bad faith. The external evidence may only raise a presumption against them, but the internal leaves not the shadow of a doubt. We are not now thinking of contemporary opinion, but taking the writings on their own merits. For it will be of importance if we come to a clear conviction as to the moral quality of the composer himself. Is it really possible to accept the postulate that all is naïve and innocent, childlike and bland? For our part we find it incredible that there is no purpose of deception in the case of a writer of the second century who, to serve party ends, and to throw over his work the glamour of veracity, invented such

subtle touches as the tears that Timothy shed in Paul's presence, the medical advice to Timothy, the cloak and parchments left at Troas, the sickness of Trophimus at Miletus, the summons of Titus to winter at Nicopolis, the Apostle's earnest assertion of his own authority and truthfulness, and his declaration that he is the chief of sinners. No matter how high the moral exhortations of the writings may be, the morality of the writer himself is below the Christian standard. He must have been conscious of insincerity, and is an illustration of the vice, which he himself specially condemns, of "speaking falsely in hypocrisy."

But if we be convinced that the author was guilty of a studied attempt to deceive his readers, there follows the question with regard to inspiration. It is freely granted that any form of literary composition which came most naturally to an inspired man, would be a proper vehicle for the conveyance of his message, whether poetry or parable or the very plainest of plain speech. If there were no conscious transgression of any moral principle, it would be impossible to refuse inspiration to a pseudonymous writing on the mere ground of its pseudonymity. But if there be the conscious insincerity that we believe there must have been, then we have to consider the question: Could we conceive such a writer, under the Christian dispensation, a medium of revelation such as the Spirit of truth and holiness would use? It is very difficult to think of any but one answer to this question. If we are "to try the spirits whether they be of God," what better test can there be than that now applied? It seems to us that if the case of Christian morality breaks down, and we certainly regard it as in a condition of utter collapse, the claim to a place in the canon must go with it.

Modern theories, however, are working round to the position that the Epistles are not entirely fictitious, but that they contain fragments, of greater or less extent, belonging to indubitably Pauline letters. This will not, in our opinion, relieve the moral question; it will rather greatly intensify it. We could more easily believe in the

good faith of pure pseudonymity than in that of palpable patchwork. Moreover, it is a flagrant anachronism to suppose that ingenious literary mosaics were customary among Christians of the second century; and critics have fallen into the error of attributing modern refinements of deception to an age that knew little or nothing of them. As Bertrand remarks, no writer of the age referred to would ever have dreamt of carefully preserving a few authentic fragments which in his eyes could have no importance whatever, much less would he have thought of using them as literary precautions to give to his own work the appearance of authenticity.

But the interpolation theory is legitimate enough from the point of view of literary criticism. It is perfectly proper to recall the vicissitudes through which the Christian literature would naturally pass in the early eras of its existence. At the same time, such an admission does not throw open the door to rampant havoc according to the idiosyncrasies of individual students. The interpolation hypothesis must be strictly limited by principles of psychology and reason, and is not even warranted in application save as a last resort. This is not how a large number of modern critics have regarded it. It is their first and last appeal, the easy solution of any difficulty that presents itself to their imaginations. Each writer feels free to give the kaleidoscope a fresh turn, and then records with blissful confidence what are called the 'latest results.' Unfortunately this passes with many for learned acumen.

The whole method proceeds in its application on a totally false and unphilosophic basis, and is even childishly blind to the most elementary characteristics of human nature. It really postulates that a writer must always preserve the same dull monotone, or always confine himself to the same transcendental heights. He must never break out in a new direction, never descend to the valleys or the busy scenes of common life, above all he dare not widen his thoughts with the process of the suns, or differ from the utterances of his early days. He must see and say everything at once; having had his vision and his dream,

he must henceforth be like a star and dwell apart. It is not permissible having been grave ever to be gay, or gay ever to be grave. To be stereotyped is his only salvation. Thus do the men of the midnight oil understand the men of action and life. On such principles there is not a writer of note, and there never has been a man in public life, or a student in the stream of a progressive science, large parts of whose sayings and doings could not be proved to be by some one else. It cannot be conceived that the author of *Sordello* could ever have written the simple lyric of *Evelyn Hope;* or that the mind that produced *In Memoriam* could sink to the bathos of "Old Year roaring and blowing, And New Year blowing and roaring." Burns could never have written half the poems attributed to him; for there are 'radical and inexplicable differences' in the very nature of the poet who wrote *Tam o' Shanter,* as compared with the other poet who wrote *To Mary in Heaven.* And not only so, some of the poems differ so wonderfully within themselves, that they cannot possibly be homogeneous or all from the same pen. Surely it is time that such vagaries of criticism were laughed out of court. The interpolationists in many cases have reached the very *ne plus ultra* of absurdity. We know nothing more worthy of their attention than Lord Bacon's warning. "It is the vice," he tells us, "of subtle minds to attach too much importance to slight distinctions; it is the vice, on the other hand, of high and discursive intellects to attach too much importance to slight resemblances." And he adds that, "when this last propensity is indulged to excess, it leads men to catch at shadows instead of substances."[1]

It is certainly a mild judgment on the interpolation theory to say that "it does not work out well in details" (Hort). How can it, when each man has become a law unto himself, and disports himself at will in the shoreless sea of an unlimited hypothesis? Dr. Clemen's *Einheitlichkeit* is a very valuable book in this respect. It is in large

[1] *Novum Organum*, Lib. i. Aph. 55; quoted in Macaulay's Essay on Lord Bacon.

part a bewildering collection of interpolation views on the Pauline Epistles, and is a solemn warning of the ease with which interpreters sink in the Serbonian bog of a sophisticated subjectivity. No wonder that Holtzmann and Jülicher utter vigorous protests, for they clearly perceive that such untrammelled licence is likely to drag legitimate criticism into contempt. It will speedily bring matters to the level of the Shakespeare-Bacon controversy, and the picturesque results of a variegated Bible will have no more value than the "grotesque gabble of the cipher." We have had occasion to differ in not a few cases from Dr. Moffatt's judgment in his learned book on the New Testament, and we have therefore all the more pleasure in gratefully recognising the service he renders in certain of his strictures on the application of the interpolation theory. He is in this respect a true disciple of his school, whose leaders express themselves in much contempt of the "insanity" of the methods pursued in the Netherlands. The matter could not be better stated than in Dr. Moffatt's words:

"It is a delicate question to follow the movements of a writer's mind from one topic to another, or to be sure that any given passage is a foreign interpolation, and not an episode or an outburst. The problem becomes trebly difficult, when, as is often the case, external evidence fails. Then especially, it is not easy to get a footing on reliable arguments. In the case of a letter, above all, the psychological method must be fairly tried before a section or clause is finally abandoned. The connection of thought, particularly in Paul, does not always lie upon the surface; and what is apparently abrupt may ultimately resolve itself now and then into an inner continuity. In employing the hypotheses of interpolation and compilation it is easy to be arbitrary. . . . These hypotheses are often handled with a brilliance that is really specious . . . their way of handling the facts is dim and perilous and arid. Ingenuity of this mechanical kind does not always get upon the track of simple and spontaneous expression." [1]

Whatever Dr. Moffatt's practice may be, we have every

[1] *Histor. N.T.*, p. 624.

reason to be grateful for his theory. His warning is as needful as it is admirably expressed. Were it remembered, it would free a legitimate science from many a "frolic of paradox and conjecture."

The literary criticism of the Bible is an absorbing pursuit. It is of course all that 'Higher Criticism' really means, although that unfortunate phrase is often taken to mean something different. Eichhorn introduced the name in the eighteenth century,[1] merely to distinguish the method from that of Textual Criticism, and it has been used ever since for better or for worse. Many, who should be better informed, think that 'higher' is intended to suggest something superior, and 'criticism' something necessarily hostile, with the result that the phrase is flung about contemptuously as if it contained an equal mixture of heresy and conceit.

The truth is, the study of the Bible as literature cannot be avoided even if we would. And yet a caveat here also may not be amiss. Such study is so apt to fix our attention exclusively on the mere dress that we sometimes forget the man who wears it; it is all of the lexicon, and too little of the life. Further, in this country most of those who are devoted to the literary criticism of the Bible, are men who have also undertaken to preach the revelation which the Bible enshrines as a living message of salvation. The danger in their case is to attempt to box the mind into compartments, so that the Bible is

[1] Both the method and the name were previously employed in the domain of human literature, in dealing with the classics and with ecclesiastical writings. But although Eichhorn had a few notable predecessors in the method as applied to the Bible, he was the first (1780) to use the name in this connection. In the preface to the second edition (1787) of his *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, as reproduced in the fourth edition (1823), I. viii., he says: "Die meiste Mühe musste ich auf ein bisher noch gar nicht bearbeitetes Feld, auf die Untersuchung von der inneren Beschaffenheit der einzelnen Schriften des Alten Testaments durch Hülfe der höheren Kritik (eines keinem Humanisten neuen Namens) wenden." Cf. also pp. 95, 96 of the fourth edition. The student will find an interesting account of the Rise of the Higher Criticism in Briggs' *Biblical Study* (1884), pp. 196 sqq.; cf. also his book on *The Bible, the Church, and the Reason* (1892), p. 122.

regarded as a dead thing at one moment, and as a living thing at another. This will not affect men who are mere students; it will affect students who are also ministers. A ministerial critic should never forget that ruthless criticism at his hands is not dissection but vivisection. We do not for a moment mean that he should not be as earnestly critical as it is in his power to be, but only wish to point out that he at least can never view the Bible entirely *ab extra*, or treat it as a 'vile body,' while it is the most sacred duty of his life to unfold its contents as the power and the wisdom of God. Study with him should not grow less, but reverence should grow from more to more.

## IV.

## MESSAGE OF THE PASTORALS. CONCLUSION.

Through the storm and stress of many long centuries the Pastoral Epistles have been held in high esteem by the Church, and have fulfilled a noble mission. If they had never been written, many hearts engaged in the service of Christ, often weary and baffled with their labours, would have missed one of their truest friends. They tell us how a servant of the Lord must bear himself in a church of a living God, how unsullied must be his life, how prudent and kindly his relations with his flock, how single-eyed and steadfast his attitude to that message that makes wise unto salvation. They can never be read without gratitude by any one who earnestly seeks to fulfil the Christian ministry, yet who is often troubled by the form and pressure of his times. To all such they speak a word in season, and in the spirit of love and power and of a sound mind.

The true standpoint of their interpretation is secured by simply bearing in mind the motive that dominated the Apostle's life—his zeal for the cause of Christ, his continual longing to bring men into the kingdom of grace. He writes because he loves the souls of men, and because he believes they may be redeemed unto holiness, and made heirs of eternal life through the gospel. Without this background of evangelical love and hope, the Epistles have no great significance; with it, each part at once falls into its true perspective. Only let us keep this Pauline 'characteristic' in view, and there will be no difficulty in understanding the other interests that are displayed. It is for this sake that the concern about the sound words is shown, and that the lines of discipline and good order are laid down. The motive is not ecclesiastical in any narrow sense, but purely evangelical and apostolic. Neither sound doctrines nor orderly organisations are ends in themselves. Some Christians have almost made shipwreck by

so regarding them. The writer of these Epistles is not guilty of so gross a blunder. He worships neither creed nor polity, although he is alive to the high importance of both. The life of grace is supreme, eloquent of God as it blossoms in piety and good works, the consummation ever to be desired. But it is this supremacy of Life that alone gives value to the means that lead to it, the instruments and channels that serve it best. For this cause the word is more precious than gold, yea than much fine gold; and the good order of a household of God is priceless as at once a source of peace and purity within, and an influence of grace and power beyond. The peril is to make a fetish of the means, and, in our idolatry of 'helps and governments,' to forget the goal to which the Cross leads on. The Pastoral Epistles do not minister to this forgetfulness, but wisely remind us that there are things with which we dare not part, and that there are methods at hand by which such a goodly heritage may both be conserved and used for still larger fruits.

There is also another function fulfilled by the Epistles. They give us invaluable glimpses of the close of a great career, whose energy and faith, whose grace and tenderness, are unabated to the end. There is no falling away, or feebleness, or doubt. Age has found the Apostle only more deeply rooted in Christ. Trial and tempest have only more firmly bound him to that living Lord.

For Paul's sun is setting fast when 2 Timothy is written. There is much that is touching in his isolation and in his craving for sympathy. Like his Master he treads the wine-press alone. But there is no ignoble murmur on his lips. There is not even a shadow of fear in his heart. He does not expect his Lord to come as he once did, but he expects to go to Him, which is much the same. And the end probably came swifter than he thought. It is not likely that Timothy reached him before the judgment was given. He was denied the comfort of that dear presence. And when the sentence of death was uttered, there was no influence or clemency to stay its execution. In the shimmering light of a mid-summer morn-

ing he was led forth to his doom. Perhaps a morbid and curious crowd followed the heels of his escort, and, afar off, would be the few friends who still dared to keep him in sight. He was taken out through the city-gate that now bears his name, and along the dusty Ostian Way a mile or two, until he reached a small green hollow surrounded by lowly knolls. One last lingering look was his on the deep blue sky, and on the soft undulating lines of the Italian hills, and then the lictor's sword flashed for a moment in the light, the bowed head was smitten from the body, and one of the best and bravest souls that ever breathed went home to God. The crowd dispersed. But the friends gathered the bleeding body, and bore it back to a little garden by the wayside, where they reverently made its sepulchre, in a spot which the veneration of Christians has marked time after time with the noblest piles of masonry and the richest treasures of art.

So perished the great Apostle whose life-story these writings so clearly reveal. Little could he dream that for long centuries his living words would inspire the heart of the Christian world, would fire the imagination of its saints, and call forth the deepest thoughts of its wisest men. They have been the quickeners of life and liberty, the spring of some of the mightiest movements that have affected human history.

Very conspicuously do these Epistles of Paul, taken as a whole, reveal his character, and endear him to us for his own sake. Of his relation to Christ they suggest but one word: "Behold how he loved Him!" Never was there devotion more complete than that which followed the "apprehension" on the way to Damascus. Perhaps in all human story there has never been a life that surpassed Paul's in its abandonment to one great purpose. He could say as almost none other ever could: "This one thing I do." The love of Christ, the service of Christ to which that love inspired, and the consuming desire to be like Christ, were the master-impulses of his life. No earthly terror or prize or ambition could ever draw him from his allegiance.

Not only so, loving Christ, he loved all for whom Christ died. He was a man of the widest and tenderest sympathies. He longed for the salvation of all men, and was ready to spend himself to the uttermost if by any means he might win some. We marvel at his anxiety and tears for those humble converts in Greek and Roman cities, who had heard his message, and were turning, amid awful hindrances and temptations, from the deep darkness of paganism into the light and liberty of the knowledge of Christ. How gentle and courteous he was towards them! How he remembered their names, and encouraged them in their faith! "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is made to stumble, and I burn not?" A man of exquisite tact and most disinterested affection, "he had a thousand friends, and loved each as his own soul, and seemed to live a thousand lives in them, and died a thousand deaths when he must quit them."[1]

Yet with all the focussed unity of its magnificent purpose Paul's life was most complex, and is found most difficult to summarise. Schürer says of him that "he was the most living and mobile spirit the world has ever seen." He was so versatile in his gifts and interests that we have scarcely noted one distinguishing trait when we feel we must set another beside it that looks like its opposite. His personality was magnetic; he attracted and repelled with equal force. Many never omitted to notice his insignificant stature, his marred visage, his weak and often distorted frame, his unpolished and provincial speech; but to others the bright spirit, the tender heart, and the shining light of the inspired eyes, so transfigured him that they saw no defect, and were ready to receive him as "an angel of God." He boasted of being both Jew and Gentile, and he sometimes showed the narrow strength of the one, and sometimes the cultured humanism of the other. He loved perfectly, and he also hated with all his might. At times he soothes with the gentle touches of a friend, but he can also lash with the fiery indignation of a foe. He

[1] J. H. Newman, *Subjects of the Day*, p. 404.

is equally to be dreaded by an adversary when he endeavours to persuade and when he determines to confound. There are moments when he is prudent and cautious to a degree; anon he is impetuous and impulsive to the very verge of rashness. Moods of passion and of peace, like the changes of April skies, alternate in his life. Now he is so moved with anxiety that he cannot rest or restrain his tears; again he is so confident in God that no disaster or 'infirmity' can make him dismayed: now he is humble, self-abased, seemingly abject in his own eyes, and again he is radiant and jubilant, absolutely confident in the power and triumph of the indwelling Christ. One wonders if the same man speaks, and whether a single soul could ever compass in its experience such heights and depths.

Mr. Holt Hutton, in his *Theological Essays*, has a passage on Paul's character, written with great sympathy and spiritual insight. At the close of his review of Renan's *Saint Paul*, in summing up his impressions of the Apostle, he says he can never think of him—

"with his tender remembrance of all the old women and slaves in his various little Churches, his 'outward fightings and inward fears,' his visions and his humiliations, his signs and mighty deeds and his fears and tremblings, his anxious distinction between that which his Lord had told him and that which he had thought himself; that fine tact which *might* have been strategic; that fiery temper which *was* sometimes fierce; the flesh which struggled against the spirit, and the spirit which dissolved away the flesh and painted man as, at his best, hardly approaching anything so purely good as a vacuum for God to fill; his rapidly mounting eloquence that rushes with the whole universe into the presence of God, and his sudden cries of shame and sin,—without feeling that in him we reach the highest conceivable degree of that human virtue which is *not* moral beauty, and that lovableness of spirit which is not sweetness or harmony. I have never felt that I could heartily apply to our Lord those words of Isaiah usually referred to Him, concerning His having no beauty that we should desire Him, for surely He is 'the first and only fair.' But I can apply them with my whole soul to St. Paul:—'He hath no

form nor comeliness, and when we see him there is no beauty that we should desire him; he is despised, and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; he was despised and we esteemed him not.' Yet is not his the sort of despicability which is better honoured and better loved than anything else that ever entered into our world, except indeed the light which it reflects, and the love which it reveals?"

Of Paul's message to mankind there are a few outstanding features which, in closing, we may briefly define.

1. In the first place, his starting-point is the conviction that the Dying and Risen Christ is the ever-living Saviour of men.

Jesus lives in glory on the Throne, and He lives to save. In that light all else seems plain to Paul. The Cross is a tragic mystery, yet it is the revelation of the great love wherewith God hath loved us. It is the Son yielding to death, stooping to conquer, tasting death for every man, that many sons may come unto glory. He rises again, and the curse of sin is taken away, and all who are in Him, by the regeneration of the Spirit, have peace with God.

But that is not all. The death and risen life of Christ are repeated in every believer as a dying to sin and a life unto righteousness. This is the supreme evidence of their reality and power. If these results have no place with us, then, Paul would have said, Christ is not our Saviour. Dying to live, crucified in humiliation to rise in glory, every saved man repeats and reflects in his inmost soul the passion and triumph of his Lord. And how is it accomplished? By lowly penitence and faith, faith that lays fast hold of Christ, and faith that works by love. And at the same time, by the indwelling of the Spirit. It is He who inspires and sanctifies the feeble life, and finally brings it into conformity with the perfect life of Christ.

To Paul all this is verified by experience. He knows that he is in the kingdom, because the kingdom has become

for him righteousness, and peace, and joy. The witness rises and sings in his own glad heart, and no man can silence it:

> "Yea, with one voice, O world, tho' thou deniest,
> Stand thou on that side, for on this am I."

Thus the Epistles are human documents, transcripts of life. Paul could say like the Psalmist: "I will declare what God hath done for my soul." And he does not think it a strange thing. He does not believe it to be unique, but is assured that others also have the same experience. There are many brethren around him. He has many sons in the faith. He never doubts that all have the same knowledge of Christ's saving power. Sinful and weak though they are, lost to spirituality and the secret of the Divine life as they may have been, all may come into the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

2. Thus the second broad deep note in his message is that Christ is a Saviour for all men.

The ship of the gospel may be said to have "lain in the stocks" till Paul awoke. It was he who, by God's grace, launched it abroad into the deep. The Church clung to Jerusalem, living almost in communism, so that it seemed, as has been said, as if the religion of Jesus was in danger of perishing in a mere "sociological experiment." But Paul from the first knew that he was called to be an Apostle to them that lay far beyond the bounds of the holy city. The gospel given him was not for the Jews alone, but for all God's children on the face of the earth. The Epistles reveal how earnestly he held this, and what a warfare he had to wage in order to get it accepted in the fullest sense. It not only meant that the Gentiles might enter the kingdom, but that they need not enter through a Jewish door. How bitterly he was opposed on that point! And what a victory he achieved! It was the victory of spirituality. It meant that men could not be saved by ritual and ceremony, but by Christ alone. Herein lay the possibility of converting the nations, and bringing all men to the feet of God. Paul was quick to see it, and he spent

a large part of his life in fighting for it. It was his 'good fight of faith,' and his triumph was "not the actual conversions he made, but the principle which every conversion involved." At every step onward to the West "he tore up the prejudices of ages." To every stranger whom he took by the hand he could say: "In Christ Jesus there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all and in all."

3. It was also Paul's joy to declare that Christ Jesus gathers all His people into one even on this earth.

All become one Body in Christ. This seems the true communion of saints, the catholicity and solidarity of the Church. Hence the eagerness Paul displayed to conserve the common life among Christians, and to direct their energies into channels that would glorify Christ. If the Church be Christ's Body, it must draw its power, its ethics, and its ideal from its living Head. It exists to manifest His life. It must be hands and feet and eyes for Him. It must be the living presence that men see Him by. This is Paul's noble conception. And herein is the secret of joy for the humblest believer on earth, because in saving him Christ unites him to Himself, and in so uniting him makes him, lowly though he be, a living part of His living Body. No human power can touch that union. None can sever when Christ has gathered into one.

4. Finally, Paul believed and declared that when the Lord comes again, He shall usher in a glorious destiny for all them that love His appearing.

His gospel is ever illumined by this glowing hope. With Paul it is ever: "The best is yet to be, the last of life, for which the first was made." He leads every disciple upward to the heavenly vision, and when the heart is weary and broken he rouses it by whispering: "We shall be like Him. Eye hath not seen nor ear heard what He hath prepared." It is ours to have a part in the new heavens and the new earth, a place in the restitution of all things, a happy re-union with them that have slept in Christ before us, and an eternal fellowship with the Lord Himself.

Such was the message. It is well to hear it, for sage or poet has never given better. It is as if the veil were rent, and the light of eternity streamed through. And Christ is the centre of all, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

"Christ! I am Christ's! and let the name suffice you,
Ay, for me too He greatly hath sufficed:
Lo with no winning words I would entice you,
Paul has no honour and no friend but Christ.

Hearts I have won of sister or of brother,
Quick on the earth or hidden in the sod:
Lo every heart awaiteth me, another
Friend in the blameless family of God.

Surely He cometh, and a thousand voices
Call to the saints, and to the deaf are dumb;
Surely He cometh, and the earth rejoices,
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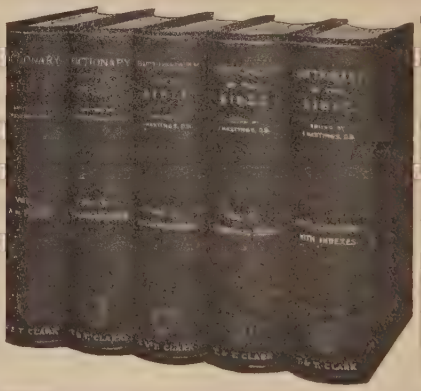

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